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**A HOPE not hate
US election special**

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HOPE not hate

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A nation divided

Welcome to this special edition of the *HOPE not hate* magazine, focusing exclusively on the United States as its citizens prepare to vote for their next President.

We have produced this 56-page special because we are fascinated by what's happening in the US, as I'm sure you are.

Not only will 120 million Americans soon be voting for the most powerful political leader in the world, but the decision they make will acutely affect everyone in the world.

More importantly though, as I hope you will see as you read this magazine, the issues facing America are not too dissimilar to what we are experiencing over here. A divided country, seemingly ill-at-ease with itself.

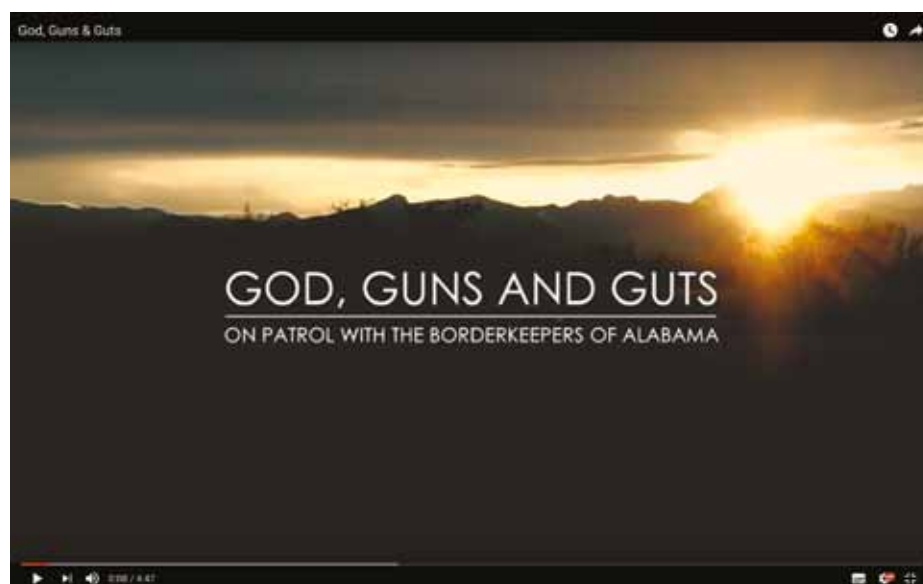
National identity, globalisation, deindustrialisation and liberalism – all colliding together into a dangerous and combustible mixture.

While our immediate attention is on 8 November, the day Americans go to vote, of equal if not greater concern is what happens afterwards, when the divisions that have been opened and widened by Trump's campaign play out.

This magazine reflects the best of *HOPE not hate*. It is the product of undercover investigations, on the ground reporting and sober and careful analysis. So, if this is the first time you have read *HOPE not hate* then I would recommend you subscribe and become a regular reader.

Watch our special video that accompanies the article *GOD, GUNS AND GUTS* with Joe Mulhall on patrol with the Borderkeepers of Alabama, see page 36.

Go to <https://youtu.be/yqKdseTbUEs>



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HOPE not hate challenges the politics of hate and organised intolerance within society.

Initially established to counter the electoral rise of the BNP, HOPE not hate mobilises communities by providing a positive alternative to the politics of hate. Since it was founded in 2004, HOPE not hate has over 270,000 online supporters, including more than 225,000 followers on Facebook.

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TERRI JOHNSON

Executive Director of the Center for New Community, dispels the myth that Obama's rise reflects a post-racial society.



CAS MUDDÉ

a professor at Georgia University, says that Trump's GOP nomination was the result of a party that has moved to the far right in recent years.

A divided nation

Nick Lowles on how Trumpism goes to the heart of a deeply divided and alienated nation

Donald Trump appears to be heading for defeat in next month's US presidential elections. A campaign that only four weeks ago was level pegging with Hillary Clinton, and seemed to have the momentum, now lies in tatters. Lewd sex comments caught on tape, a string of female accusers and a combustible temperament that has seen him send a 3am text abusing a former beauty queen have all contributed to his political downfall.

Trump is lagging 7–12% behind Clinton in the polls and looks set, if the figures are to be believed, for one of the worst political defeats a Republican candidate has experienced since 1992 (when another Clinton took the keys to the White House).

In fact, so disastrous has Trump's campaign been, that Democrats are dreaming of retaking the Senate and even the House of Representatives.

There will be a collective sigh of relief with Trump's defeat. While many people – me included – have deep misgivings about Hillary Clinton, we can all rejoice in the fact that a sexist and racist bigot is unlikely to be elected President.

Yet we would be wise to temper our excitement. While Trump's defeat is worth celebrating, Trumpism is far more than one man and unless we understand and address this then we might find a much more formidable foe in the future. Just as importantly, with Trump alleged corruption and foul play the faultlines at the very heart of US society could erupt into violence and terrorism.

Angry America

Donald Trump announced his candidature for the Republican nomination in the plush surroundings of Trump Tower in June 2015. Stating his intention to "Make America Great Again", Trump's 45 minute meandering speech outlined the basic themes of his campaign.

"I'm really rich," he proudly boasted, putting his wealth and TV fame at the



photo: Gage Skidmore

centre of his appeal. "That's the kind of thinking our country needs."

Never one to play down his own importance, he added: "I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created."

But far from being a break from the past, Trump's speech was a calculated throwback to an America of the past, not one defined by "greatness" but rather riven by racial prejudice. After boasting about his personal wealth, he announced his signature policy of building a wall along the entire US/Mexican border and making the Americans pay for it.

His comments were far more than simple anti-immigrant rhetoric. He

was deliberately playing to those who resented the changing demographic face of America i.e. that a nation defined by immigration could suddenly "freeze" in position the status of some, but not others. And by linking immigrants with crime, he was mining a deep vein cultivated by right-wing politicians (and those further to the right) over many years.

"[Mexico] are sending people that have lots of problems, and they are bringing those problems to us. They are bringing drugs, and bringing crime, and their rapists," the business mogul said.

Blacks, immigrants and crime have become the latest chapter in 300 years of racial supremacy in the United States. ➡

Racial faultlines

It can be hard for Britons to fully appreciate the importance of race in American history and society. From slavery to the Civil War, the Reconstruction to Jim Crow, from the Civil Rights movement to the decriminalisation of black youth: race and racism has been the single biggest faultline in American society.

"At the heart of the fractured soul of America is the frightening chasm of race," Manning Marable, a politics professor at Columbus University, wrote in 1997.

"Race is to the US what class is to Britain," says Michael Podhorzer, the political director of the AFL-CIO, the US equivalent to the TUC, told HOPE not hate.

The nature of racism has clearly changed over the years. When slavery become unacceptable, Jim Crow – the system of racial segregation – was introduced. When that was defeated by the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, crime became racialised and Ronald Reagan's 'War On Drugs' was used to criminalise and stigmatise African American communities.

More recently the policy of affirmative action has come under political assault from the Right. Notions of IQ differences, peddled by the likes of Charles Murray (author of *The Bell Curve*), re-emerged in the 1990s and state-level changes to voting rights have penalised poorer, non-white communities.

What is different about Trump's campaign is that he has shed much of the delicacies of modern (polite) racism and reverted to a more traditional and raw version.

While his claims of making "America Great Again" might be read as a pledge to restore the country's old industrial powerhouse, to many of his core supporters it is also a throwback to a time of racial separation and superiority.

In a country where the majority of registered Republicans still view President Obama as a Muslim and the cultural divisions have widened with the introduction of same-sex marriage, it is not difficult to see why Trump won the Republican nomination.

It also explains that despite his appalling last few weeks, he is still within a few points of Hillary Clinton.

The white working class

In a society so dominated by race, it is easy to categorise white people as privileged. Of course, in one sense, they are. White Americans have often had opportunities that are not afforded to non-whites.

Unemployment among African Americans is double that of white Americans. A white 30-year-old is almost twice as likely to have a university degree than their black equivalent, and this gap is widening all the time. There is a 21% gap between the pay of a white person over a black person doing the same job, and again this gulf has widened in recent years.

The wealth gap is even more striking. According to analysis of Federal Reserve data by the Urban Institute, white families were 4.3 times as wealthy and black and Hispanic families in 2007. By 2010, the multiple had widened to 6.1.

And even when whites fall foul of the system, the punishments they face tend to be less severe. The vastly differing punishments for cocaine (drug used by white middle class) and crack cocaine possession (which has largely inflicted poorer black communities) is just one example of how successive US administrations have legalised racial bias in the judicial system.

But it would be wrong to believe that all whites are benefiting equally from this system – because they are clearly not.

Much of Trump's most hardened support comes from those white working class communities that have seen their lives change for the worse over the last few decades, particularly those in the traditional coal and steel towns of the Appalachian mountains.

Recent studies have found that the average male full-time worker earns less now, in real terms, than they did in 1973. The drop in earnings is even greater for white working class males.

After initially benefiting from the post-war boom years, white working class communities have struggled, stagnated and declined. Over five million manufacturing jobs were lost or outsourced, and, according to the economist Colin Gordon, professor of history and public policy at the University of Iowa, wages in many traditional industries have declined 30% since 1979.

Perhaps more significantly, the life chances of their kids are far worse than their own.

"Over the past 35 years the working class has been devalued, the result of an economic version of the Hunger Games," wrote Chris Arnade, a former Wall Street trader turned photographer, in *The Guardian*. "It has pitted everyone against each other, regardless of where they started. Some contestants, such as business owners, were equipped with the fanciest weapons. The working class only had their hands. They lost and have been left to deal on their own."

"It is not just about economic issues and jobs. Culturally, we are witnessing a tale of two Americas that are growing more distinct by the day," he added.

With pessimism about the future deeper amongst working class whites than African Americans and Latinos, it is perhaps not surprising that they are angry.

Many of these people have mobilised behind Trump but, if anything, their anger will grow after he is defeated in November. They will feel more estranged and abandoned from the rest of society.

With Trump talking up the notion of a 'stolen' election, this could well turn to violence and give a boost to extremists and even right-wing domestic terrorism.

Recalibrating society

The onus will be on Hillary Clinton – and progressives more generally – to reach out to these communities. It means finding ways to regalanise their dilapidated communities and give its inhabitants a chance to build real and meaningful lives for themselves and their children. And it means crafting an American identity in which they have a role that does not require them to surrender their own proud working class traditions and cultures.

"I do think that [Trump's] success reflects the failure of established parties and the elites in both parties to speak to the sense of disempowerment that we see in much of the middle class," says Harvard professor Michael Sandel. "The major parties have failed to speak to these questions. What Trump really appeals to is the sense of much of the working class that not only has the economy left them behind, but the culture no longer respects work and labour."

The problem is that with Hillary Clinton's cosy relationship with Wall Street, little will probably change and that will only exacerbate the problem.

Donald Trump is likely to be defeated next month but the cause of his rise will remain and, if anything, become more entrenched.

But just as Trumpism goes way beyond Donald Trump, so it also extends beyond the United States. The similarities between the left-behind voters in the US and those in the UK and other parts of Europe are frightening.

There is something bigger going on here and unless we find a way to recalibrate our societies, then we are all heading for trouble.

■ NICK LOWLES is chief executive of HOPE not hate @lowles_nick

Another stunning 'come from behind' victory for the populists

The United States may be next; we're working to make sure it's not says *Frank Sharry*

FOR ALMOST two weeks in the run up to the Brexit vote, I happened to be in the UK and Europe attending conferences and meetings. I was obsessed with the campaign. I watched the televised debates every night, read the newspapers every day and desperately hoped that the forces of modernising cosmopolitanism would pull off a victory over the forces of retrograde populism.

But as immigration became the central issue and advocates for Remain were thrown on the defensive, I had a sinking feeling in my stomach. As a long-time campaigner for refugee and immigrant rights in America, I am well aware of the power and punch of xenophobia, however deftly it is packaged. By the day of the vote, that sinking feeling in my stomach had gone from

bad to worse. In the end, I was deeply disappointed by the result, but not terribly surprised.

With a month or so left before the American election, that sinking feeling in my stomach is back.

Donald Trump has made refugees and immigration the signature issue of his campaign, and as I write this – prior to the first debate – the polls are tightening.

Despite ample evidence that America's support for immigrants and humane refugee and immigration policies are stronger than ever, Trump's hostility towards foreigners – from Syrian refugees to Muslim visitors to undocumented Mexicans – is mobilising disaffected white voters in numbers that just might elect him as the next President of the United States.

God forbid. ➡



In 2012 young Latinos exercised their political muscle. Can they repeat this in 2016?

The idea of a narcissistic authoritarian who traffics in racial and religious bigotry as leader of this diverse and dynamic nation is terrifying. Similar to the heroic efforts made by HOPE not Hate and other groups in the run up to the Brexit vote, here in America community groups, labor unions and organizations such as ours are doing everything possible to mobilize Latino, Asian-American and immigrant voters in the attempt to stop Trump. It may well be that election result will turn on who is more successful at getting their voters to the polls: white working class voters for Trump or people of colour for Hillary Clinton?

For refugees and immigrants, the stakes could not be higher. If Trump is elected he has promised to do the following: immediately revoke an Obama order

million U.S. citizen children born to undocumented parents and deport them along with their parents; stop admitting Syrian refugees and halt a refugee resettlement program that next year is planning to admit 110,000 refugees from throughout the world; institute a ban on most if not all of the world's Muslims hoping to visit, do business, study or legally immigrate to the U.S.; and cut legal immigration by more than 50%.

Trump doesn't stop there. He launched his campaign by calling Mexican immigrants "rapists" and "drug-dealers." For weeks, he attacked a respected American-born judge as "a Mexican" who was too biased to preside over the case against the notorious scam called Trump University. Most recently, he spent days attacking an American Muslim family

the Mexican government pay for it.

Given Trump's unexpected rise, you would think that his nativism is hugely popular with the public. It is not. There's even evidence that Trump's association with harsh immigration policies are making them less popular. Take the key immigration issue in the United States – what to do with the 11 million undocumented immigrants who work and live throughout the country, two-thirds of whom have been in America for more than a decade. A recent *New York Times* poll finds support for a path to legal status and citizenship at an all-time high – 74% – and up eight points since the rise of Trump; and support for Trump's deportation plans at an all-time low – 21% – and a full 10 points lower than before Trump. Similar results have been found in

What about the Latino community, which is expected to make up 11% of the electorate in 2016? Here Trump is deeply unpopular, currently polling between 15% and 20%. By way of comparison, in 2004 George W. Bush received some 40% of the Latino vote; in 2008 John McCain won about 30%; and in 2012 Mitt Romney won approximately 25%.

These results give confidence to the sometimes skittish Democrats to lean into the immigration issue. In sharp contrast to Trump's overt nativism, Hillary Clinton is running an avowedly pro-immigrant campaign. She's promised to fight for the passage of immigration reform with a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants working and living in America; to use executive authority to grant many undocumented immigrants protection against deportation and work permits if Republicans in Congress block immigration reform legislation; to increase refugee resettlement quotas, with an increase for Syrians from 10,000 a year to 65,000 a year; to treat Central Americans fleeing the violence of northern Triangle countries as refugees, in contrast to the deterrence, detention and deportation strategy of the Obama Administration; and to make immigrant integration a priority for her Administration.

It seems to be paying off. In a just-released *Wall Street Journal* poll, voters prefer Clinton over Trump on immigration by a 50% - 39% margin; 69% of voters saying they have concerns about Trump's comments on women, immigrants and Muslims (54% have "major concerns;" 15% have "moderate concerns"); and voters say that immigration helps America more than it hurts it by a 54% - 35% margin (up from 47% 43% before Trump became a factor in the Republican nominating race).

So, how can we square the fact that Trump's stances



that provides work permits and protection against deportation to 750,000 young undocumented immigrants known as Dreamers; deport them as well as most, if not all, of the 11 million undocumented immigrants settled in the United States; revoke citizenship to some five

whose son died in combat in Iraq because they electrified the nation with their story and their criticism of Trump's lack of respect for the U.S. Constitution.

Oh yeah. And then there's his promise to build a 1,000 mile wall between Mexico and the United States and make

recent polls sponsored by the *Washington Post*, CNN, Gallup, Pew Research and Public Religion Research Institute. Even proposals to build a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, ban Muslims and stop the resettlement of Syrians are all opposed by a majority of Americans.

on his signature issue of immigration are unpopular with the fact that he's competitive in the race for the presidency?

For one, the issue mobilises his base of white men without university degrees (see his rallies) and the theory is that his emphasis on the issue will bring to the polls disaffected white men who might have stayed home in the past. Secondly, there are supporters who love his attitude but rationalise their support with claims he'll never actually implement the radical proposals he makes. Third, there are Republicans who dislike Hillary Clinton so intensely that they are willing to hold their nose and vote for Trump even though they strongly disagree with him on some issues, such as immigration. Still, there are just enough Republicans and independents who are so

repulsed by Trump's nativism and bigotry that their refusal to vote for Trump may prove to be a key factor should Trump lose.

Back to that sinking feeling in the stomach. Thinking about the Brexit vote, the rise of Trump and the advances being made by far-right parties in Europe, what is going on here? Here's my take: the typical right-left axis of recent elections seems to be giving way to a different kind of axis. It seems to be less about ideology and more about identity. Our elections seem to be less about the size of government and more about who gets to define our national identity. It's white nationalism vs pluralistic nationalism; Nigel Farage vs David Cameron; Donald Trump vs Jeb Bush; town vs city; the less educated vs the more educated; disaffected whites vs people of colour

and whites who love diversity.

This identity axis – this contest between the candidate of racial backlash and the candidate of racial equality – is so different this time around that the two nominating conventions took on unusual characteristics. In the past, Republicans equated patriotism with God, guns and traditional families and convention goes proudly chanted “U-S-A”. This year they mourned the passing of the America that was – before a black President and corrupt elites ruined it, presumably – and their nominee painted a picture of a dark, dystopic future threatened by menacing “others.” In the past, Democrats suggested America could only be great if the reforms the party proposed were enacted. This year, the Democrats, featuring diverse speakers and leaders who look like

the metropolitan areas of today's America, did the chanting of “U-S-A.” Far from a Republican salute to White Christian America, Democrats claimed the mantle of patriotism in recognition that our country is becoming the pluralistic and inclusive society many of us have been fighting for.

As we head into the home stretch of this unusual and consequential election, this fight for the soul and identity of America will, of course, reach a conclusion. We will either affirm our national motto *E Pluribus Unum* – Out of Many, One – or we will elect a xenophobic populist with authoritarian instincts who promises to put disaffected white men back on top.

Should that sinking feeling turn out to be prescient, we will man the barricades, engage in resistance and stand with the people Trump and his base consider the dangerous “other”. Should Trump lose, we will work to turn Clinton's promises into reality. Whatever happens, we will keep fighting for an America where character and contribution matters more than background and birthplace.

One thing that seems increasingly clear is that this fight between cosmopolitanism and populism will continue. I suspect it will emerge as the faultline of our generation, akin to the communism-capitalism contest of the 20th century and the conservative-liberal contest of the last few decades.

So be it. For our part, we will continue to build power, build support and, hopefully, prevail. Fortunately, we know we stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow warriors from across the pond. In the immortal words of Ben Franklin, if we don't hang together, we'll hang separately. ●

■ **FRANK SHARRY** is the founder and executive director of *America's Voice*, an immigration reform group.

The Birther Movement

IN MID-SEPTEMBER Donald Trump announced that Barack Obama, the President of the United States, was actually born in the United States. His long-awaited announcement took a total of 52 words.

Something that should have been so banal took five years to come out of Trump, after long-claiming the opposite. Yet there was no apology, no justification for his earlier position, and no room left for further discussion.

Trump had been the most vocal and high profile proponent of the so-called ‘Birther Movement’. Put simply, it was those who questioned Barack Obama's place of birth, and by extension his legitimacy to be President (the US Constitution states that only US-born citizens can ever become President).

Rumours that Obama was born in Kenya dogged him throughout his first Presidential run in 2008, to the point where he felt compelled to release a copy of his short-form “certification of live birth”.

This quelled all but a hardline fringe, but the issue was revived in March 2011 by Donald Trump.



“Why doesn't he show his birth certificate?” Trump demanded during one TV show.

“I wish he would because I think it's a terrible pall that's hanging over him ... There's something on that birth certificate that he doesn't like.”

For the next few months, Trump courted fellow conspiracists and even encouraged people to push for state laws requiring future presidents to produce proof of their U.S. birth.

Sadly, Trump's was not an isolated voice. Polls conducted in 2011 found that 51% of Republican voters believed Obama was born overseas.

Five years on and this figure had hardly changed. An NBC poll, carried out in early July 2016, found that 41% of Republicans still believed that President Obama was not born in the US. A further 31% were not sure.

At its core, the Birther Movement contains an intrinsically racist ideology, as it ultimately questions the right of an African American to be a normal American citizen.

Trump understood the cultural and racist vein running through this issue and mined it to the full.

Fear and Anger in the Rust Belt

Joe Mulhall reports on deindustrialisation and blue collar Trump support in Pennsylvania



Industrial abandonment,
Carbon County, Pennsylvania,
Photo: Nicholas A Tonelli

“Studies have shown how in addition to community decay and high crime rates, deindustrialisation and the resulting economic decline of a community can have an impact on the physical and mental health of former workers!”

Are you here to laugh at us?’ We were perched at the bar of the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Club in Duquesne, a rundown town that sits on the Monongahela River in Allegheny County about 10 miles south-east of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A large camouflaged artillery piece, surrounded by dozens of American flags, adorned the front lawn outside. Inside an imposing mural of a golden eagle, clutching a banner that read ‘All Gave Some, Some Gave All’, stared down across the dark and smoky bar.

The idea that anyone would come to a place like Duquesne and actually care what the local people thought was anathema to Liz, a single mother, ex-steel worker, military veteran and now commander of the VFW club. She echoed a sentiment I have heard time and time again: a feeling that people living in economically deprived places like Duquesne have long been ignored by politicians, journalists and the East Coast elites... or even worse laughed at.

Duquesne itself is a sad example of the ravages of deindustrialisation. At one point the steel mill was home to ‘Dorothy 6’, the largest blast furnace in the world. However, after 20 years of bathing the town in her orange hue the furnace was scheduled for demolition in 1984, and despite a protracted battle by workers, unions and the local community it was never fired again and eventually pulled down in the late 1980s.

All that remains of this once-world famous mill is a single metal memorial plaque by the side of a car park. In its place is a bleak post-industrial landscape, the town shrunken and dilapidated. Like so many similar places the fortunes of the town were intrinsically tied to its main industry; with its death the town began to die too. Duquesne now has a population smaller than the number of people employed at the steel mill during its peak.

When I asked Liz what people did for work in the area she paused, shrugged her shoulders, then shook her head. Shockingly the estimated annual per capita income in Duquesne in 2013 was

just \$14,177 (£10,750). About 34.7% of the town’s population live below the poverty line and that number jumps to 52.9% for those under the age of 18.

Beyond Duquesne

Sadly, the story of Duquesne is not unique. In the aftermath of the recession of the 1980s around 153,000 steel workers were made redundant across the USA. If you follow the winding Monongahela River today, the banks are intermittently scarred by vast, rusting and derelict industrial buildings such as the abandoned Carrie Furnace for Homestead Steel Works. Once the sight of one of the most serious disputes in U.S. labour history, today it is a crumbling memorial to the area’s faded industrial past.

The once-mighty Mon Valley now has just three remaining steel works and even the plants that have survived employ just a fraction of the workforce they did at their peak (in part due to technological advancements). Jason Crosby, a third-generation steel worker based at a plant in Christie Park, McKeesport, on the Youghiogheny River, making huge steel pressure vessels that hold gas and fluids, explained to me how his plant employed 7500 people in the early 1970s, but now provides jobs for between just 50–60 people.

Similarly, David Morgan, a steel worker and trade union organiser at the Mon Valley Works Irving Plant reminisced about how things have changed since he was a child: ‘I remember as a little kid, all my friends, everybody, their dads worked in the steel mill. Then the 80’s came and a lot of my friends moved away because the steel mills closed up. I see people now who don’t even realise that steel

workers are in this area because there are just so few anymore.’

David told a story that can be heard throughout the Mon Valley and would no doubt resonate across the Atlantic in areas like Teesside in the north-east of England: ‘Its taken a very big downturn and now I am worried about the ones that are still left because of all the imports that are coming in, the dumping from China and what have you, it’s getting worse by the year.’

When I asked him if we would be seeing Pittsburgh steel being made in 50 years a sadness came over him. ‘Oh, I hope so, I hope so,’ he said pausing and shaking his head. ‘Probably five years ago I would have said absolutely, but now I’m not so sure.’

Deindustrialisation Nationwide

Of course, the decline of industry in the Mon Valley is not an isolated tale. Deindustrialisation and the decline of American manufacturing has affected communities across the country. In 1965 the share of manufacturing employment was 28% but by 1994 this had dropped to just 16%.

Recently there has been another wave of deindustrialisation and it is estimated that between 2001 and 2009 a further 42,400 factories closed across America. The first decade of the 21st century has seen the loss of 5.8 million manufacturing jobs due to the recessions of 2001-02 and 2008-10.

While it would be wrong to say deindustrialisation has been universally negative (there have been some upsides, such as the declining rates of fatal occupational injury since the 1970s) the effects on some communities has unquestionably been devastating. The loss of well-paying jobs associated with factory closures and resulting long-term unemployment has a deleterious impact on the social fabric of those communities.

Studies have shown how in addition to community decay and high crime rates, deindustrialisation and the resulting economic decline of a community can have an impact on the physical and mental health of former workers.

Heroin Epidemic

Figures produced by the U.S. government's National Survey on Drug Use and Health have shown that around one in six unemployed workers is addicted to alcohol or drugs. This might explain in part, when coupled with the primary cause of widespread addiction to prescribed pain medication, the terrible stories I heard about Pennsylvania's heroin epidemic.

One steel worker at the Irving Plant who graduated in 1992 explained to me how 86 of his 224 classmates are now dead from the drug. He dubbed the nearby town of Clariton as the 'capitol of heroin'. Such stories are not uncommon. Another worker at a different plant estimated that at least one-quarter of his son's former school year would be using the drug in one form or another.

The actual statistics are horrifying. In 2015, in a state of under 13 million people, 3,383 people died from overdosing on opioids: this is greater than the number who died in the whole of England and Wales in 2014. This current epidemic has spread well beyond the urban areas that one might expect, out into smaller rural communities across the state. While the current epidemic has been felt across the nation – opioid overdose nationwide has quadrupled since 2000 – it is the 'Rust-Belt' states where the number of deaths per 100,000 population are among the highest.

While Pennsylvania has seen some success stories it is clear that wounds opened by deindustrialisation and the decline of its world-famous steel industry have by no means healed. Many people in communities like Duquesne and the wider Mon Valley are angry about the jobs that have long disappeared and scared about the future.

Trump Has The Answers?

Speaking to workers at a metal recycling facility in Monessen, Pennsylvania, just thirty miles from Steel City, Donald Trump said:

The legacy of Pennsylvania steelworkers lives in the bridges, railways and skyscrapers that make up our great American landscape.

But our workers' loyalty was repaid with betrayal.

Our politicians have aggressively pursued a policy of globalization – moving our jobs, our wealth and our factories to Mexico and overseas.

Globalization has made

the financial elite who donate to politicians very wealthy. But it has left millions of our workers with nothing but poverty and heartache.

When subsidized foreign steel is dumped into our markets, threatening our factories, the politicians do nothing.

For years, they watched on the sidelines as our jobs vanished and our communities were plunged into depression-level unemployment.

Many of these areas have still never recovered.

[...]

Under a Trump Presidency, the American worker will finally have a President who will protect them and fight for them.

No question these comments reveal a staggering level of hypocrisy: Trump-brand products have been outsourced to China, Brazil, Honduras, Europe and beyond. Back in 2005 he even said that outsourcing was 'not always a terrible thing' and sometimes 'a necessary step'.

Yet none of that means that what Trump said isn't true, at least in part. Globalisation has been wonderful in so many ways, cheaper consumer goods for one, yet there have been losers: people and communities that have been left by the wayside of progress. It is with these people that Trump's message – hypocritical or not – has resonated.

When I asked Jeffery O'Kelly, a worker at the Clariton Coke Plant, the largest coke manufacturing facility in the United States, about Trump support on the shop floor he estimated that around half his colleagues would vote Republican this time around.

'I know why they are supporting Trump', he said. 'The biggest

reason is that he says everything that they want to hear.' Which is ...? 'Mostly it's about jobs.'

Back at the Irving Plant, David Morgan echoed this point.

'The floor used to be pretty much 100% Democratic vote. There is [sic] more people now that are not Democrat any more, they are leaning towards Republican... There is a lot of people leaning towards a Republican vote, probably more than there ever has been.'

This idea of 50% shop floor support for Trump was pervasive. This was an industrial environment where the Democrats would have once weighed the vote rather than counted it. Unsurprisingly these newly-divided loyalties had led to tensions and reports of fist fights on the factory floor were not hard to find.

Have the Democrats taken these communities for granted much as the Labour Party had with industrial communities in the UK?

Nationwide

While the anecdotal evidence I gathered in the Mon Valley suggested a clear shift towards Trump, and echoed the media consensus that he had energised the white working class, the polling data nationwide reveals a much more complex and nuanced picture.

Some have pointed out that at times Trump is actually less popular with the white working class than Romney was back in 2012. Others have noted that exit polls conducted in 23 primary states showed that



Donald Trump
photo: Gage Skidmore

Trump voters' median income exceeded the overall statewide median in all 23 states. Also, Trump supporters earn more than supporters of Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders.

However, a recent report published in *The Atlantic* showed that 90% of Trump support is white and 62% of his support comes from white men and women with no degree.

In addition, a recent study undertaken by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) in collaboration with the Brookings Institution provides statistical backing to the fear, anxiety and anger of the American working class.

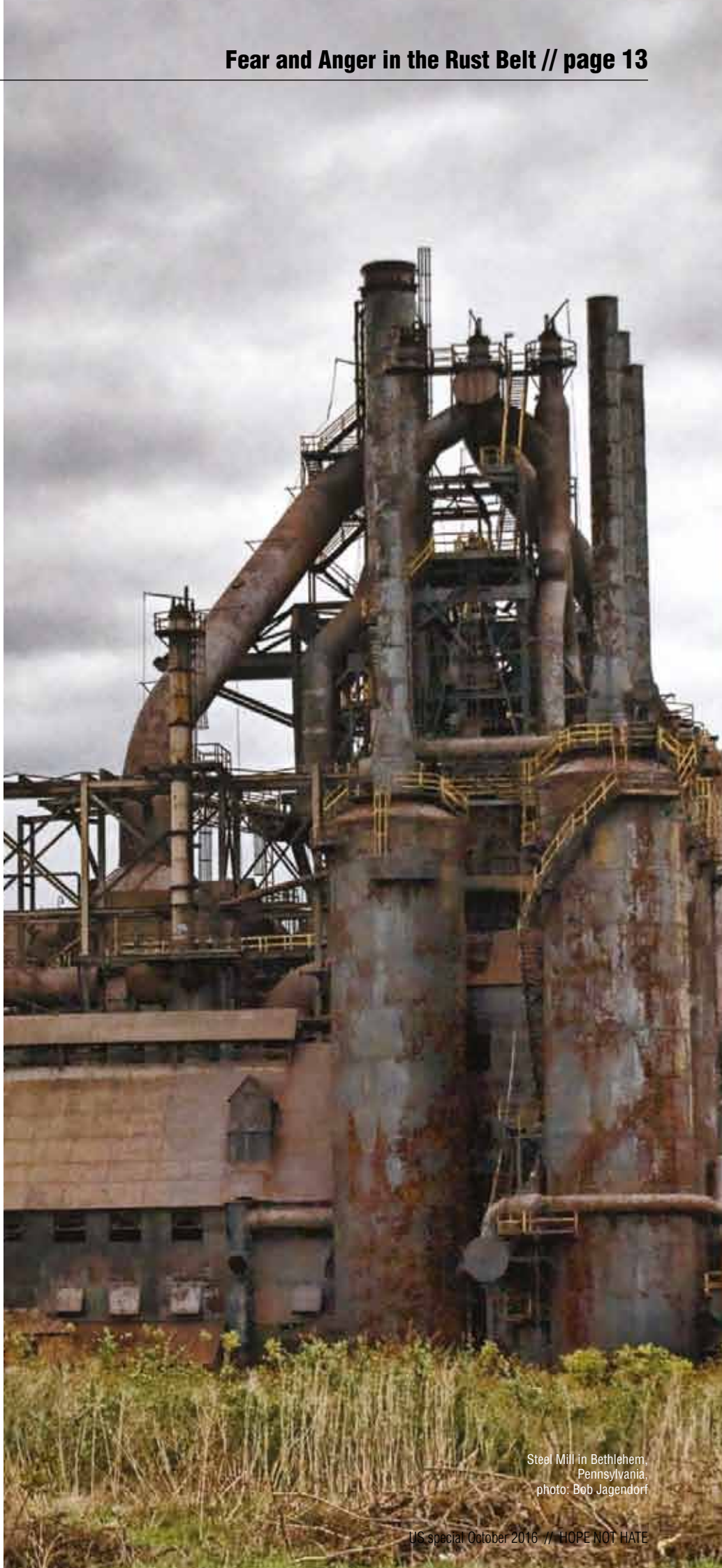
For example, 62% of white working class Americans think life has changed for the worse since the 1950s, while 68% believe that the American way of life needs to be protected against foreign influences.

Interestingly 66% of working-class whites say that discrimination against whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against blacks and other minorities – 62% believe that this is true for Christians as well. This was a position that was forcefully articulated to me by a retired police officer and missionary worker from Alabama. When I asked him if Christianity and Christian people in America were under attack he didn't hesitate: 'Oh absolutely! Absolutely!'

This fear, sense of decline, economic insecurity and even persecution become manifest in a hostility towards immigrants. The PRRI survey shows that 61% of white working-class voters believe that immigrants weaken them by taking jobs, housing and healthcare while 71% think that immigrants mostly hurt the economy by driving down wages. This fear results in a severely uncharitable attitude, with a majority believing the entry of Syrian refugees should be made illegal and a temporary ban on non-American Muslim immigration should be imposed.

Summing up the study, William A. Galston, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said: 'The most plausible interpretation is that working-class whites are experiencing a pervasive sense of vulnerability. On every front – economic, cultural, personal security – they feel threatened and beleaguered. They seek protection against all the forces they perceive as hostile to their cherished way of life – foreign people, foreign goods, foreign ideas, aided and abetted by a government they no longer believe cares about them.'

■ JOE MULHALL is senior researcher at
HOPE not hate @JoeMulhall_



Steel Mill in Bethlehem,
Pennsylvania,
photo: Bob Jagendorf

FEVER PITCH

Jo Mulhall reports from a Trump rally in Ohio

YOU COULD tell right off that this was different to the sort of political rally or meeting you might get in the UK. It was only 8am and already the carpark was filling and the queue forming outside the nondescript Roberts Centre in Wilmington, Ohio.

Trump was in town and this group of supporters, replete with the now famous red 'Make America Great Again' baseball caps, was getting there early, determined not to miss out. Those without a hat could buy one as they waited, along with 'Hillary For Prison' and 'Build The Wall' badges. For those so inclined they could also snap up a tasteful 'Hillary Sucks But Not Like Monica' t-shirt with 'Trump That Bitch!' emblazoned on the back.

Trump wasn't due to arrive until lunchtime but the rapidly gathering crowd was already excited. An armed man in a bulletproof vest, rather oxymoronically reading 'Secret Service', came around to remind the crowd to leave all fire arms, ammunition and knives in their cars. Some people laughed but apparently someone nearer the front had carelessly forgot to empty a magazine of bullets from his pocket.

After hours of queueing the line snaked through security and into the main hall. The mood inside was more like a gig or show than political rally. You could buy popcorn and snacks at the back and the large hanging speakers blasted out the Rolling Stones' greatest hits, only occasionally interrupted by an out of place recording of Pavarotti's *Nessun Dorma*.

The room filled with a crowd of all shapes, sizes and

ages. Old, young and in-between were out in force and ready to hoot and holler for their man. The only unifying characteristic was their whiteness.

The speeches

The jovial festival vibe soon changed once the first speech began. After the mandatory prayer, national anthem and pledge of allegiance came the chairman of the Clinton County Republican Party. As he bellowed the ills of Hillary, Obama and the Democrats, one man shouted 'Hang the witch' – in reference to Clinton – and when he moved onto Obama's failings a man nearer the front

shouted 'lynch him!' A few people laughed, while others pulled slightly nervous faces, but no-one otherwise contradicted him.

This country feels so divided and the visceral hatred of liberals and the Democrats by Republicans and Trump voters feels scary. During former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani's speech the room echoed with the chant of 'Lock her up! Lock her up!' Someone shouted 'Hang the traitor'. One man got so agitated about Hillary's continuing freedom that his wife had to actively calm him down.

With the arrival of Trump, the anger turned to adulation

as he swiftly knocked out a greatest hits speech. The biggest cheer of the day was saved for his immigration policy and his promise to build a wall on the Mexican border. Then, just like that, it was over and the Rolling Stones 'You Can't Always Get What You Want' bellowed out as he walked the front row shaking hands and signing hats.

Summing up the mood of the day is difficult. There was a peculiar mix of vitriolic and violent anger and hatred, simultaneously mixed with jubilation and adoration. Like the wider political discourse itself there seemed no room for subtlety or nuance. This was a matter of black or white, good or bad, and – critically – what was 'American' or 'un-American'.

This election doesn't feel like a matter of mere ideological difference that can be fought out via the ballot box. The fact that you can buy blow up Hillary punch bags in a carpark outside a Trump rally underlines that rather emphatically.

The people in the Roberts Centre had the fervour of zealots fighting for the very soul of their country. After eight years of Democratic rule they truly felt America was in crisis; 'the laughing stock of the world' as they saw it.

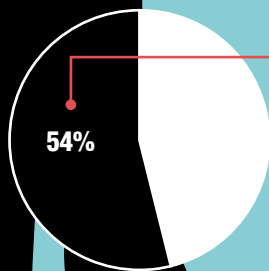
For them this was crossroads moment: down one road lay the end of the America they loved, while down the other lay salvation. For many around the world the idea of Trump becoming President is petrifying, but the violent anger of people like his supporters in Wilmington is not a comforting thought either. ●



FEAR & HOPE IN THE USA

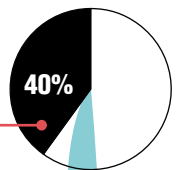
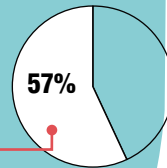
A new poll conducted by CNN in early October found a majority of Americans say relations between blacks and whites in the US have worsened under President Barack Obama.

The survey results come as an increasing number say discrimination against blacks is a very serious problem and concerns about bias in the criminal justice system remain widespread.



54% say relations between blacks and whites have become worse since Obama became president, including **57%** of whites and **40%** of blacks.

This is up from **43%** in June 2015.



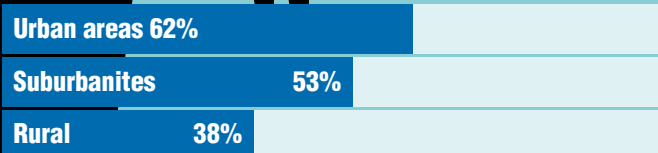
52% say the criminal justice system in the US favours whites over blacks. **36%** say the criminal justice system treats blacks and whites equally.

Three-quarters of blacks and **one-half** of whites feel the system favours whites.

62% of whites who hold college degrees saying the system favours whites over blacks vs. just **42%** among whites who do not have college degrees.

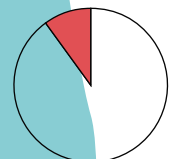
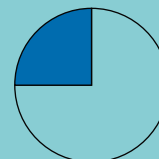
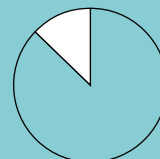
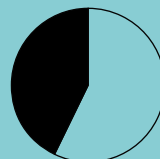


The criminal justice system is discriminatory

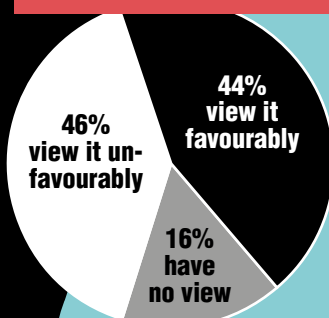


The share describing discrimination against blacks generally as a very serious problem has inched up from **37%** last June to **42%** now.

Few Americans see their local police as prejudiced against blacks, but there are sharp differences by race and between those who live in urban areas vs. rural ones.



Black Lives Matter movement



78% of blacks have a favourable view

38% of whites have a favourable view

Solving America's racial tensions



TRUMP



CLINTON



Among whites, Trump held an edge 49% to 42%



Amongst blacks, Clinton's led 85% to 11%

The CNN/ORC Poll was conducted by telephone September 28 through October 2 among a random national sample of 1,501 adults, including 1,086 non-Hispanic whites and 140 non-Hispanic blacks.

Timeline of race and civil

Jewish civil rights activist Joseph L. Rauh, Jr. marching with Martin Luther King in 1963.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott decision to deny citizenship and constitutional rights to all black people, legally establishing the race as "subordinate, inferior beings – whether slave or freedmen."

The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled in the landmark case Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas that public school segregation was unconstitutional and paved the way for desegregation.

The first African slaves arrive in Virginia.

Congress bans the importation of slaves from Africa.

13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery.

The 15th Amendment granted blacks the right to vote, including former slaves.

1619

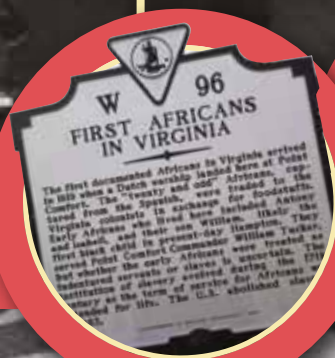
1808

1857

1865

1870

1954



1787

Slavery is made illegal in the Northwest Territory.



Dred Scott

1820

The Missouri Compromise bans slavery north of the southern boundary of Missouri.



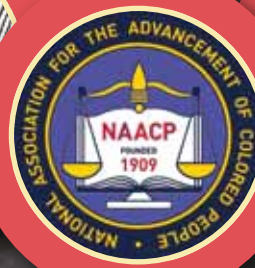
1861-65

American Civil War. Seven Southern slaves states declared secession from the Union and formed the Confederacy States of America. War broke out in 1861 and ended with a victory for the North in spring 1865.



1868

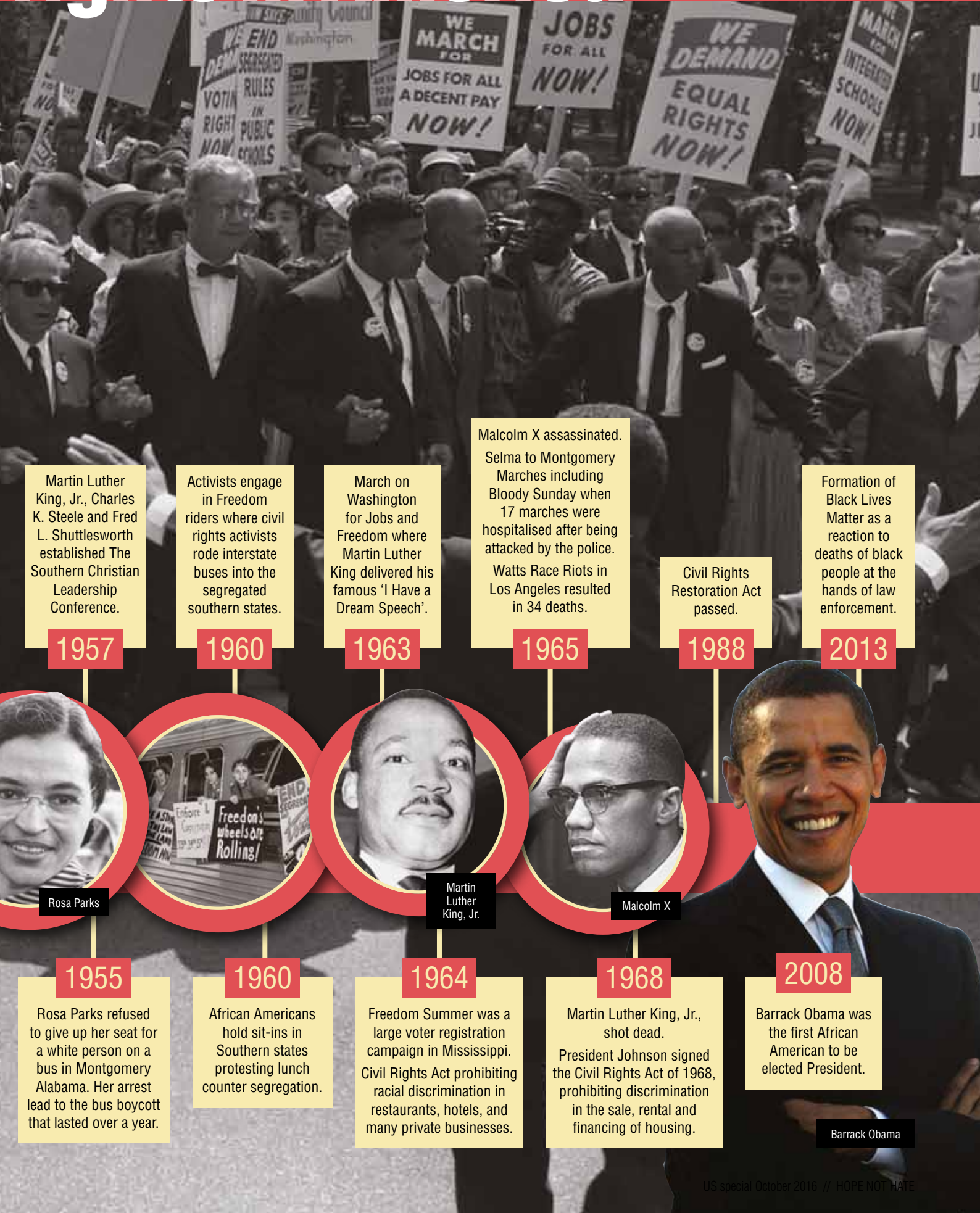
The 14th Amendment granted due process and equal protection under the law to African Americans.



1909

The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) was founded by a multi-racial group of activists in New York, N.Y.

rights in America



Martin Luther King, Jr., Charles K. Steele and Fred L. Shuttlesworth established The Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

1957

Activists engage in Freedom riders where civil rights activists rode interstate buses into the segregated southern states.

1960

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where Martin Luther King delivered his famous 'I Have a Dream Speech'.

1963

Malcolm X assassinated.
Selma to Montgomery Marches including Bloody Sunday when 17 marches were hospitalised after being attacked by the police.
Watts Race Riots in Los Angeles resulted in 34 deaths.

1965

Civil Rights Restoration Act passed.

1988

Formation of Black Lives Matter as a reaction to deaths of black people at the hands of law enforcement.

2013



Rosa Parks

1955

Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white person on a bus in Montgomery Alabama. Her arrest lead to the bus boycott that lasted over a year.



1960

African Americans hold sit-ins in Southern states protesting lunch counter segregation.



Martin Luther King, Jr.

1964

Freedom Summer was a large voter registration campaign in Mississippi. Civil Rights Act prohibiting racial discrimination in restaurants, hotels, and many private businesses.



Malcolm X

1968

Martin Luther King, Jr., shot dead.
President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing.



Barack Obama

2008

Barrack Obama was the first African American to be elected President.

America's post-racial fantasy shattered by the reality of racism

By **Terri Johnson** Executive Director, Center for New Community

SINCE APRIL, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and at least 200 other Native American tribal nations have been protesting a \$3.8 billion Dakota Access oil pipeline that would run through four states, because it would disturb sacred sites and contaminate the Missouri River, which supplies water for residents on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and millions who live downstream. Setting up four resistance camps, they have successfully stopped construction with their bodies and horses.

"It's about our rights as native people to this land. It's about our rights to worship. It's about our rights to be able to call a place home, and it's our rights to water," said Jessie Weahkee, one of the protestors from Albuquerque, New Mexico.¹

On September 3, private security guards unleashed vicious attack dogs and used pepper spray on the peaceful protesters; at least six people were bitten, including a young child.

The incident and images evoke the Children's Crusade or D-Day, designed by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which took place from May 2 -5, 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama. For days, children – young and teenaged – attempted to walk from the 16th Street Baptist Church to City Hall to meet with the Mayor and integrate state buildings. Peacefully they walked and were met with violence.

During the protest, Eugene "Bull" Connor ordered the use of high pressure fire hoses, batons and attack dogs. Reports tell us that Connor, the Commissioner of Public Safety said, "All you gotta do is tell them you're going to bring the dogs. Look at 'em run. I want to see the dogs work."²

Children as young as six were knocked down by the force of the water, bitten by the dogs, and hauled into jails. Images of the protests and the violent reactions were captured and seen throughout the US and the world. Embarrassed by the coverage and concerned about economic repercussions, the white leaders began the process of dismantling

the policies that sustained the city's segregation and inequality.

Fifty-three years later, the United States is in another movement moment, exemplified not just by the tribal nations fighting against the pipeline and for their rights, but also those working through the Movement for Black Lives³, Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)⁴, 18 Million Rising⁵, MPower Change⁶, United We Dream⁷ and countless other organisations. This post-civil rights generation is putting their lives on the line, raising their voices, taking to the streets and highways, gathering on college campuses and engaging online to demand that the nation dismantle the systems and institutions that have perpetuated racialised, unequal quality of life outcomes for people of colour. (In this article, people of colour refers to those who identify as African Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, indigenous people, Middle Easterners and bi-racial people who claim the identity).

This convergence of broad-based, multi-cultural and intergenerational racial justice movements, eight years after the election of President Barack Hussein Obama, the first African American (and bi-racial), man to hold the office illustrates the pre-maturity and absurdity of the idea that America became "post-racial" in 2008.

On November 9, 2008, the day of the election, Richard Cohen, the controversial Washington Post columnist (who has on more than one occasion written problematic things about race⁸) wrote that Obama was only "incidentally a black man" and "it is not just that he is post-racial; so is the nation he is generationally primed to lead".⁹

This idea was echoed in television commentaries, interviews, articles and essays, most often by whites. The term, "post-racial" was first used in the early 70s to describe the way Southern states were working to move past race relations marked by strife to a mixed coalition working to improve their circumstances. Just as the South was not "post-racial"

in the 70s, the United States as a whole was not "post-racial" in 2008. American apartheid was still real.

The nation had transformed since the days of slavery and Jim Crow. Progress had been made. But centuries of racism, violence and exclusion were not erased and the scars and trauma of generations who had lived through it were not healed because one person of colour was elected.

When people talked about being "post racial," they were often really talking about being "post black" or more charitably, "post-racist-against-blacks". After all, blackness is seen as an opposite to the default – the ideal – of whiteness, and chattel slavery and the legacies it left behind continue to shape American society. Sometimes it seems as if the desire for a "post racial" America is an attempt by white people to liberate themselves from the burden of having to deal with that legacy.

Anna Holmes,
America's "Postracial" Fantasy,
New York Times, June 29, 2015¹⁰

The United States' racial divides, while impacting all communities of colour, are centered on the fault lines between African Americans and whites. And these populations don't see the issue of race through the same lens. They are not on the same page.

According to a June 2016 Pew report, "On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites Are Worlds Apart", 66% of whites and 51% of other minority voters believe race relations in the US have gotten worse since Obama's election, but just 38% of blacks agree. 49% of black voters and 32% of other minorities think race relations are about the same.

Whites are about twice as likely as blacks to say there is too much attention paid to racial issues and about six-in-ten blacks say too little attention is paid to these issues¹¹.

This perception gap and the hard evidence to the contrary during the 2008 and 2012 elections and what has

happened for the eight years of the Obama administration are the reasons the idea of a “post-racial” America gained little traction in communities of colour. Not only did the idea not gain traction, for many people of colour, especially African Americans, the idea was offensive.

During the campaign, both Obamas were depicted as unpatriotic, un-American and animalistic, using tropes and stereotypes almost as old as the country. A phenomenon that continues today.

During the administration, there has been overt disrespect of President Obama wrapped up in so-called partisanship and patriotism laced with good old-fashioned racist vitriol.

And as the Obama administration ends, we see a growing backlash and negative reaction to people of colour who dare to air their legitimate grievances that is powerful, profound, destructive and in some cases, deadly.

Outside of studying the treatment of the Obamas, the first African American family to reside in the White House, more proof that the nation is neither “post-racial” nor “post-racism”, can be found in the lived experience of everyday people of colour.

A list of data sets, statistics, comparisons and historical and anecdotal evidence would tell a story of continued and renewed discrimination in the housing and job markets, failing public school systems, concentrated violence and poverty, contaminated water systems, decaying urban infrastructure where most people of colour live, segregated neighborhoods that better predict health outcomes than lifestyle, mass incarceration, increased racial profiling and surveillance of communities of colour, a growing number of hate crimes, recent policies like voter suppression designed to minimise the power of communities of colour and the murder of citizens of colour by police officers.¹²

It can also be seen in the political and cultural landscape:



■ Mainstreaming of hate speech and rhetoric in our political discourse amplified during the current election season – there are no code words and dog-whistles.

■ Cries against political correctness and multiculturalism during a time when the country is more diverse than it has ever been.¹³

■ Racialisation and dehumanisation of Muslims, immigrants and refugees resulting in dangerous rhetoric and speech as well as exclusionary policy proposals.

■ The increased membership in white nationalist groups that started immediately after Obama was elected and continues today.

■ Interrogation of popular culture that commodifies, whitewashes, undervalues and “columbuses”¹⁴ the contributions of people of colour.

■ Actions and calls to remove and rename the monuments to slavery and

slave owners on statehouse grounds and universities.

■ The debate about whether or not it is black lives of citizens or blue lives of police officers that matter and the failure of those crying all lives matter to admit that if all lives mattered was real, the movement to save black lives would not exist.

In 2008, the progress that allowed us to elect our first African American president was clear. Eight years later, some of the progress we thought we made has eroded and what is clear is the amount of work yet to be done to end racial injustice.

The United States has never been “post-racial” and never will be until and unless we are prepared to stop fantasising about a country where race no longer matters and begin the hard work of building one, finally, where race no longer determines who amongst us gets to be free and equal. ●

NOTES

1 N.D. Pipeline Protester: ‘It’s About Our Rights As Native People’, NPR story, September 12, 2106. <http://www.npr.org/2016/09/12/493532162/n-d-pipeline-protester-its-about-our-rights-as-native-people>

2 Freedom has come to Birmingham. Freedom: A History of Us. http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web14/segment6_p.html

3 For more information about the Movement for Black Lives, go to: <https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/>

4 For more information about SURJ, go to: <http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/about>

5 For more information about 18 Million Rising, go to: <http://18millionrising.org/about/>

6 For more information about MPower Change, go to: <https://mpowerchange.org/about/#dustin-craun>

7 For more information about United We Dream, go to: <http://unitedwedream.org/about/our-missions-goals/>

8 Matt Connolly, Richard Cohen’s 10 Worst Moments, Counted Down. November 12, 2013. <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2013/11/richard-cohen-just-the-worst>

9 Richard Cohen, The Election that LBJ Won. November 9, 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/03/AR2008110302609.html>

10 Anna Holmes, America’s “Postracial” Fantasy, June 20, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/05/magazine/americas-postracial-fantasy.html?_r=0

11 On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites Are Worlds Apart, Pew Research Center, June 27, 2016. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-inequality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/>

12 Since 2014, there have been 2,195 police shootings; the number of victims is predominantly people of colour, disproportionately African American. <http://www.vox.com/a/police-shootings-ferguson-map>

13 Depending upon the source, will, as a group will be the majority sometime between 2042 and 2050. Some counties, metropolitan areas and states are already there.

14 Columboising is when white people claim they have invented/discovered something that has been around for years, decades, even centuries. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Columboising>

The 21st Century Movement for Black Lives in the United

Activism is reshaping the American political and civil rights scene.

By Terri A. Johnson, Executive Director, Center for New Community, Chicago

THE UNITED STATES is experiencing a resurgence of activism – a renewed call for racial justice and the destruction of systemic racism and discrimination (finally!). Some call it a new civil rights movement, others a “post-civil rights movement”. One organisation declares on its T-shirts: “This ain’t yo daddy’s civil rights movement”.

Whatever label we use, we are witnessing something profound and powerful. And, while difficult to assess or even describe this moment since it has only just begun, some reflection is important. Particularly so, since it is happening in the midst of some of the most explicit and organised racist attacks, from both extremists and policymakers alike, that we have seen in some time.

Tired of systems designed to hyper-police black communities and black bodies, traumatised by living with the baleful results of at least 30 years of public policies – economic, housing, education, criminal justice, environmental, drugs – that have diminished the quality of life for African Americans, especially those living in poverty, confronted with the erosion of the hard-earned gains of the 1960s and a growing inequality gap in the 21st century, groups of young people have been galvanised by the murders of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and Michael Brown in 2014 and seemingly countless other deaths of black people at the hands of police and vigilantes.

They have taken to the streets, highways, shopping malls and campuses in protest, mobilised communities and formed groups like Black Lives Matter, Black Youth Project 100, Assata’s Daughters, the Dream Defenders, Hands Up United, the Black Liberation Collective and We Charge Genocide (to highlight just a few). They have created initiatives and campaigns like

Campaign Zero, #SayHerName and #BlackGirlsMatter and clearing house spaces like “We The Protestors”.

Employing traditional organising tactics and contemporary strategies born of the internet, social media and big data, they are forcing change and getting results.

Black Lives Matter is arguably the most well known of the groups because it is a national network, a hashtag used to capture and tell the story of its work, and a rallying cry. According to its website, since 2014 there have been more than 1,030 protest actions and its first national gathering in July 2015 had over 1,000 participants.

Focusing on systemic transformation – not just access – this movement calls for the elimination of practices, systems and institutions that harm African American communities, especially law enforcement and the prison system. Some of this generation of activists name themselves abolitionists, imagining completely different approaches.


Like its predecessor, this movement has multiple leaders (Black Lives Matter and others call it “leader-full”) – there is no single “saviour”.

Unlike the first civil rights movement, the contributions of women, gay, lesbian and transgender people are not hidden or erased. They are at the forefront of the work. Black Lives Matter was co-founded by three women, two of who identify as queer.

Most of these groups engage the political system differently. Not having to fight for the dismantling of practices that prevented African Americans from voting at state and local levels like their predecessors, this movement has catalysed a stronger black left throughout the political sphere.

Recently, the groups fought against the re-election of incumbent candidates in

States



Chicago and Cleveland and successfully created an environment where the State's Attorney in Chicago and the county prosecutor in Cleveland were not re-elected largely because they were slow — or failed — to prosecute police officers who shot and killed African American citizens: 17-year-old Laquan McDonald in Chicago and 12-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland.

Another key difference, often expressed by today's activists, is philosophical. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was a commitment to what is now called "respectability". To get a "seat at the table of power," many civil rights activists believed that they needed to prove themselves worthy and non-threatening. Today's movement architects experience a world where changed laws and practices have not always resulted in changed behaviours. They know that "respectability" keeps nobody safe and, in the past, left many behind.

But even as today's activists question the respectability approach, they are, in fact, trying to do something similar: what Black Lives Matters co-founder, Patrisse Cullors, calls a "rehumanising project." As she explained during a recent segment of radio show, *On Being*, "We've lived in a place that has literally allowed for us to believe and center only black death. Literally whole human beings have been rendered to die prematurely, rendered to be sick and we've allowed for that. We have to change that."

Like their parents and grandparents' generations, these activists are taking their rage, frustration and grief and channelling it into their work for change. New voices in a very old struggle for freedom, they are leading an organised mass movement that is holding the United States accountable for its failure to uphold its democratic promises. ●

Did Trump really

By **Cas Mudde**

EVER SINCE Donald Trump became the presidential candidate for the Republican Party, the party establishment has claimed that the real-estate mogul, turned reality tv star, turned politician has “hijacked” the Grand Old Party (GOP). Their argument is that the GOP stands for very different values than Trump and Trumpism. Some critics have countered that this might hold true for the party establishment but not, or less so, for the party supporters, let alone those that vote in the party’s primaries.

When one looks at the 2016 Republican platform, which is supposed to be the official position of the whole party, it does seem that the GOP and Trump(ism) have little in common. The platform is a fairly traditional GOP document, defending US ‘exceptionalism’, the free market, the traditional family, and other Republican classics. It mainly reflects Trumpist positions in its almost obsessive attacks on President Obama and its harsh tone on “illegal immigration” and “illegal immigrants.” That said, both are popular tropes within the GOP and Trump is hardly the only leading Republican to espouse them repeatedly. More importantly, the platform is largely a symbolic document, traditionally ignored by the presidential candidate as well as most of the party’s national, regional, and local representatives.

If Trump has truly *hijacked*

the GOP, it would mean that the party did not already have many prominent radical right representatives before his ascendance. This is true if we focus exclusively on the most visible party leaders, like (toothless) party leader Reince Priebus, Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, House majority leader Kevin McCarthy or House speaker Paul Ryan. But at least a minority of its Members of Congress openly hold radical right positions, such as Louie Gohmert (Texas) and Steve King (Iowa) in the House of Representatives, as well as Ted Cruz (Texas) and Jeff Sessions (Alabama) in the Senate. Gohmert and King regularly meet up with European radical right leaders, including German AfD leader Frauke Petry and Dutch PVV leader Geert Wilders.

Moreover, radical right politics – inspired by authoritarianism, nativism and populism – run rampant at the state and local levels, among governors and legislators alike. For example, it is almost exclusively among GOP-controlled states that strict anti-immigration and ‘anti-Sharia’ legislation have been introduced. And the vast majority of Republican governors refused to accept Syrian refugees into their state, on the unfounded allegation that they would include terrorists. It is also at the state and local level that the links between the GOP and established radical right

groups, like the John Birch Society (JBS) and various white supremacist groups – misguidedly referred to as “alt right” in much media – are often much more open.

So, while Trump is perhaps not very representative of the GOP at the federal level, this is not true at the state (or local) level – particularly in the American “heartland” between the two coasts. And if we look at the level of the party supporter, Trump is in many ways a much more accurate *representative* of the GOP electorate than party establishment politicians like Mitch McConnell and failed presidential candidate Jeb Bush.

Poll after poll has shown that a plurality if not an outright majority of GOP supporters, not just those that support Trump, hold authoritarian, nativist, and even racist attitudes. For example, a 2012 poll, well before the rise of Trump, found that 79% of Republicans expressed (explicit) racial prejudice about African Americans; to be fair, the differences between white Republicans and white Democrats towards African Americans are not so large, but the Republicans have by now an almost completely white electorate, while Democrats have a much more diverse support base. On other minorities the numbers are not much better: in a 2015 poll 59% of Republicans believed that immigrants had a negative

impact on US society, while in a 2014 poll clear majorities of Republicans held negative views on both Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans.

Similarly, conspiracy theories about issues such as global warming and refugees, as well as political opponents like President Obama and Hillary Clinton, find broad support among the wider GOP electorate. For example, a staggering 81% of Republicans think it is (definitely or possibly) true that Hillary Clinton “knew the US Embassy in Benghazi was going to be attacked and did nothing to protect it”, while 54% think the same about the statement “global warming is a myth concocted by scientists,” and 53% believe that Obama was not born in the US.

This is not surprising, as GOP politicians have enthusiastically expressed versions of these conspiracy theories and prejudices for years. In fact, both the 2012 and 2016 GOP primaries were full of presidential hopefuls espousing nativist sentiments. This year all major candidates proposed to limit the rights of minorities such as gays and Muslims. In fact, the three last-standing candidates in the primaries (Cruz, Rubio and Trump) *all* called for increased monitoring of “Muslim communities” in sharp opposition to religious freedom and, obviously, the First Amendment. And in one of the low points in the

hijack the GOP?

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campaign, Rubio and Cruz, both Cuban Americans, were trying to out-Trump each other on immigration with Rubio outright denying his previous support for immigration reform and blurring lines between immigrants and terrorists.

Moreover, Cruz, the second most popular Republican in the primaries, is the most prominent supporters of many of the most popular far right conspiracy theories in the US – including insane conspiracies around “Agenda 21”, an alleged attempt to put “the tentacles of the UN into US institutions” (one of the key conspiracy theories of the far right John Birch Society), and “Jade Helm”, the 2015 US military training exercise in several Southern states that many far right activists in Texas thought was a secret Pentagon plan to invade their state.

In short, there is little evidence for the thesis that Donald Trump is a far-right outsider who has infiltrated a mainstream right-wing party, as the establishment is desperately trying to tell you and most mainstream media continue to confirm. If Trump really has hijacked the GOP, he hijacked it from its leaders, not from its supporters. Moreover, given that almost all major leaders have by now endorsed Trump as their party's presidential candidate, it seems that the GOP leadership is suffering from Stockholm Syndrome. ●

Trump's Appalachian cheerleaders

THE BEDROCK of Donald Trump's support can be found in the small towns and rural countryside of the Appalachian mountains.

Stretching from Alabama in America's deep south, to Ohio and even New York state in the north, the people who have originated from the Appalachian mountains have been Trump's most fervent supporters and appear undeterred by the latest controversies which have inflicted his campaign.

In the Republican primaries, Trump won all but 16 of the 420 electoral counties that make up Appalachia country.

Overwhelmingly white and of Scots-Irish descent, the people are poor, proud and tough. For two hundred years the workers who occupied the mining and steel jobs that formed the backbone of America's industrial dominance, but the jobs have now been replaced by unemployment, anger and resentment.

The people, who self-define themselves as hillbillies, were historically strongly Democrats but many became known as the Reagan Democrats and switched allegiances in the 1980s. Now they, and another chunk of those who had stayed loyal to the Democrats, are backing Trump.

In 1992, Bill Clinton won 70% of the vote in Appalachian counties. In 2008, Hillary Clinton swept these counties in her primary bid against Barack Obama. Now, a combination of continued economic decline, Bill Clinton's role in signing the free-trade deal NAFTA and Trump's populist message to Make America Great Again has shifted these voters in huge numbers.

Polling over the summer showed

that Trump led Clinton amongst white working class voters – who are the overwhelming majority of voters in this region – by a margin of 44%.

Economic decline is only half the story. The Hillbillies of the Appalachian region are also culturally a world apart from the liberal multiculturalist east and west coasts. Economic decline has simply reinforced and deepened this cultural divide.

Razib Khan, in his Discovery essay, *The Scots-Irish as Indigenous People*, said that the Scots-Irish were “the most persistent and unchanging regional subculture in the country. Their family structures, religion and politics, and social lives remain unchanged compared to the wholesale abandonment of tradition that's occurred nearly everywhere else.”

J. D. Vance, in his brilliant book *Hillbilly Elegy*, gives probably the best insight into the problems of the region. Building on Khan's description, Vance says: “this distinctive embrace of cultural tradition comes along with many good traits – an intense sense of loyalty, a fierce dedication to family and country – but also many bad ones. We do not like outsiders or people who are different from us, whether the differences lies in how they look, how they act, or most important, how they talk.”

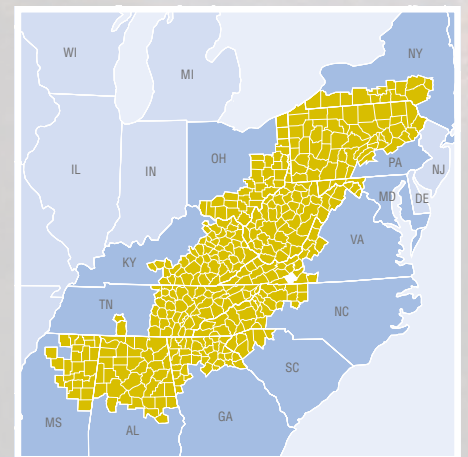
Above all, Vance's book describes the deep pessimism of today's hillbillies. “More pessimistic than Latino immigrants, many of whom suffer unthinkable poverty. More pessimistic than black Americans, who material prospects continue to lag behind those of whites. While reality permits some degree of cynicism, the fact that

hillbillies like me are more down about the future than many other groups – some of whom are clearly more destitute than we are – suggests that something else is going on.

“Indeed it is. We're more socially isolated than ever, and we pass that isolation down to our children. Our religion has changed – built around churches heavy on emotional rhetoric but light on the kind of social support necessary to enable poor kids to do well. Many of us have dropped out of the labor force or have chosen not to relocate for better opportunities. Our men suffer from a peculiar crisis of masculinity in which some of the very traits that our culture inculcates make it difficult to succeed in a changing world.”

It is the combination of strong and unchanging identity, economic hardship and pessimism about the future for their kids that has created a fertile ground for Trump.

The Appalachian Region



TURNING ARIZONA BROWN

Joe Mulhall speaks to Latino communities organising in the face of profiling and prejudice

In a pretty competitive field of American states with oppressive and regressive immigration legislation and attitudes towards immigrants Arizona is the most notorious.

In 2010 the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighbourhoods Act (Arizona SB 1070) was passed. Despite its innocuous name, it has been one of the most draconian and racist pieces of legislation passed since the Civil Rights era.

The passing of SB

1070 compounded existing problems that resulted from Arizona being home to 'America's Toughest Sheriff', Joe Arpaio. The notorious Sheriff is infamous for his 'Tent City' prison in the desert, where temperatures can reach 145 F, as well as for numerous abuses of power and accusations of racial profiling.

Yet in the face of this dark and desperate situation comes an inspirational story of organisation and resistance which

once again shows what communities can do when they come together, stand up and fight against injustice.

Show Me Your Papers

As far back as 2005 Arizona has been the epicentre of the USA's often fraught and controversial immigration experience, when Sheriff Arpaio launched his controversial and aggressive campaign against suspected undocumented immigrants.

In April 2010 governor Jan Brewer signed SB 1070 into

law, when it quickly became better known as the 'show me your papers' law. This highly-controversial legislation granted police officers the power to detain anyone they suspected of being an undocumented immigrant: it essentially deputised all local law enforcement officers as immigration agents.



The problem came with the definition of the 'reasonable suspicion' officers were supposed to use. Shockingly the directives given to police departments appeared to be blatant racial profiling, directing officers to listen for Spanish, look at certain types of clothing, even the kind of music being played in a vehicle.

Ian Danley, director of One Arizona, a coalition of 14 organisations that formed in the wake of SB 1070 and which focus on civic engagement, said: 'It was basically the most anti-immigrant piece of legislation we had seen in a generation and the entire country paid notice and all eyes were on Arizona. Arizona became really the hotbed and ground zero for immigration issues in the country.'

Arizona's Latino population felt under attack and the ramifications of this anti-immigrant onslaught sent shockwaves throughout the community.

Effect of SB 1070

The reaction to the passing of SB1070 were, of course, mixed. A nationwide Rasmussen Reports poll at the time indicated that 60 percent of Americans were in favour, while Gallup found that just over half (51 percent) backed it. In Arizona Rasmussen found that 64 percent of Arizonans supported the bill and Brewer's approval ratings shot up.

However, the bill was to have heart-breaking ramifications on families and the wider Latino community. The widespread deportation of undocumented immigrants spread terror through Arizona. Pita Juarez, also involved with One Arizona explained: 'It effected the families who were terrorized... Imagine every single day thinking you could be separated.'

Things became so bad that some community groups trained families on what to do when faced with a deportation. 'It's insane for us to have to tell kids who are



five years old "if you come home to an empty house this is what you do". The emotion that it caused in the state and in our community was terrible,' said Pita.

This visceral sense of fear is something that can be heard time and time again in Arizona. Alejandro, a Mexican taxi driver in Phoenix who had lived in America for 20 years told me: 'It was scary, people were scared, people left.'

He wasn't exaggerating: people did indeed flee Arizona. A report by Mexico's largest financial institution, BBVA Bancomer, suggested that as many as 100,000 Hispanics left Arizona in the wake of SB 1070's passing.

For those who stayed it

altered their existence and forced many into the shadows. Shockingly a report on the UNHCR website refworld.org explained that some domestic violence shelters in Arizona were seeing that 'some women with questionable immigration status have been avoiding domestic abuse hotlines and shelters for fear of deportation.'

Families were literally torn asunder and left divided across a border, with some deported and others not. Mixed-status families lived in constant fear of being wrenched apart.

While some of the law's most controversial provisions were eventually struck down as unconstitutional

by the U.S. Supreme Court, enough remained to force the community to mobilise and take action.

Mobilising in the face of attack

In the face of this attack the Latino community began to organise unified resistance. 'It really woke some people up and made us think somebody has got to do something,' said Pita.

Out of all the anger and fear that surrounded SB 1070, coupled with decades of attacks on immigrant communities, came something positive. Activists and organisations united under the banner of One Arizona to speak out with

one voice against what was happening to their families and community.

This coalition of 14 organisations came together despite differing agendas – and the impact has been remarkable.

“The real victory for us is the amount of organising we have been able to do in the wake [of SB 1070],” said Ian Danley. ‘And nothing like that has passed since or will be able to be passed in the future because we have built a lot of power in the face of that attack which spurred us. We were all working but it really spurred us into a really locally driven effort here in Arizona.’

Activists have engaged in demonstrations, community action and education programmes that have mobilised the Latino community. As one One Arizona activist said: ‘Because of all the terrible things that have happened we have been able to educate a lot of the community on what are your rights, what do you do, and it really is empowering people.’

Central to this process has been a non-partisan voter registration drive that focuses on getting low propensity Latino voters onto what is called the Permanent Early Vote List (PEVL), essentially a postal vote that doubles the likelihood that people will vote.

In the last five-and-half years the organisation and its activists have held demonstrations, registration events and knocked on doors across the state and tripled the number of people on the PEVL from 90,000 in 2010 to over 300,000 today. They also plan to register somewhere between 70,000 and 100,000 voters in the run up to this year’s November election.

Turning Arizona Blue?

Except for Bill Clinton’s win in 1996 and before that Harry Truman in 1948, Arizona has been a solid Republican state for decades. Last time around Mitt Romney beat Obama by a resounding nine points.

However, despite its long history of being a solid red

state, change may be in the air. People are beginning to ask if the growth of the state’s Latino community, coupled with their increasing levels of voter registration, could swing the state towards the Democrats.

Off the back of Trump’s divisive anti-Latino rhetoric recent polls show that he and Clinton are within a few percentage points of each

“ *Arizona’s shifting demographics and the work of community groups to register Latino and ethnic minority voters is having a clear effect on the state’s political landscape.* ”

other. Clinton has begun to pump serious advertising money into the state.

However, a One Arizona spokesperson said that the activists who are braving the scorching summer heat to register voters door-to-door are not doing so for the Democrats or any particular candidate, but rather for their family and their community.

‘We are not really interested in turning it blue or anything,’ said Pita Juarez. ‘Really we are interested in having a voice at the table. When we register so many people that look like us and we put our voice where it needs to be heard you can’t ignore it anymore.’

‘We are in no way shape or form an extension of any political party or candidate in fact we want to hold all candidates accountable,’ said Danley. ‘So anybody who gets elected in Arizona is going to have to answer to this new electorate that we are building voter by voter. That is where the power will rest, in this community, in this electorate, in these families.’

There is often suspicion of mainstream parties. Many in the community have dubbed President Obama the ‘Deporter-in-Chief’

due to the fact that he has overseen the deportation of 2.5 million people, more than any other president before him. It is perhaps understandable, then, why Danley said: ‘We don’t want to turn Arizona blue. We want to turn Arizona brown.’

One thing is for certain though: intentionally or unintentionally Arizona’s shifting demographics and

the work of community groups to register Latino and ethnic minority voters is having a clear effect on the state’s political landscape.

Real Change

As well as being strong enough to block and modify hostile anti-immigration legislation, there have been numerous examples of genuine tangible positive change. In Phoenix there are now three Latinos on the City Council for the first time.

Perhaps the most important victory has been the successful One Phx ID campaign. It started when a group of women in west Phoenix were being denied access to their kids’ school as they didn’t have a valid form of identification.

The mothers began to organise and soon realised the lack of a valid form of ID was a much wider issue, especially for undocumented people in the Latino community. In addition to their schools it restricted their access to law enforcement, jobs, housing, financial institutions, home and workplace protection and city services like libraries.

It also became clear that a lack of an official ID was not just a problem for the

undocumented community but also for homeless people, as well as runaway youths, the disabled and elderly, survivors of domestic violence and transgender people.

As Viri Hernandez, a Mexican immigrant who works for the Centre For Neighbourhood Leadership and was a coordinator of the One PHX ID coalition, put it: ‘This fight has forged alliances built on commonalities of oppression. This has really brought a lot of organisations and constituencies together. What we realised is that it is not just an immigrant fight. It’s not just an LGBTQ Trans fight. It’s not just a homeless shelters fight. This is everyone’s fight. What we saw is how powerful we can be together. How we can win together.’

What started out as a fight for an ID for the Latino community grew and developed into a coalition of over 100 groups that represented numerous different causes, all united by a common goal to push for a multifunctional ID card that would provide valid proof of identity for any and all Phoenix residents.

After two years of organising and fighting the battle was won in August 2016, with the council leaders voting to introduce a card that would be open to undocumented immigrants and others who faced barriers to obtaining government identification. It was a major practical, as well as symbolic, victory in Sheriff Joe Arpaio’s state.

Brighter Future

There is no doubt that there are many battles ahead but the Latino community and its friends have shown that they can win, and will win, again in the future. Ian Danley is not afraid.

‘Our movement has come of age and is ready for the work at hand. We are not afraid about November. You can tell the folks on the other side of the pond that we are ready, we are active and it is going to be a good election day for us.’ ●

AMERICA

Whoever wins the presidential race in November there will still be deep divides in American society that continue beyond the elections, especially along racial lines

80

Clinton leads by 80 points among African American voters and 43 points among Hispanic voters
(Washington Post/ABC News, Sept 2016)

ON ELECTIONS

WITH THE race to become President dominating most attention, it is sometimes forgotten that Americans will also be heading to the polls to for a whole variety of elections on 8 November.

America has a bicameral legislature called the United States Congress, made up of two chambers: **The Senate** (upper house) and the **House of Representatives** (lower house).

This November 34 of the 100 seats in the Senate are being contested.

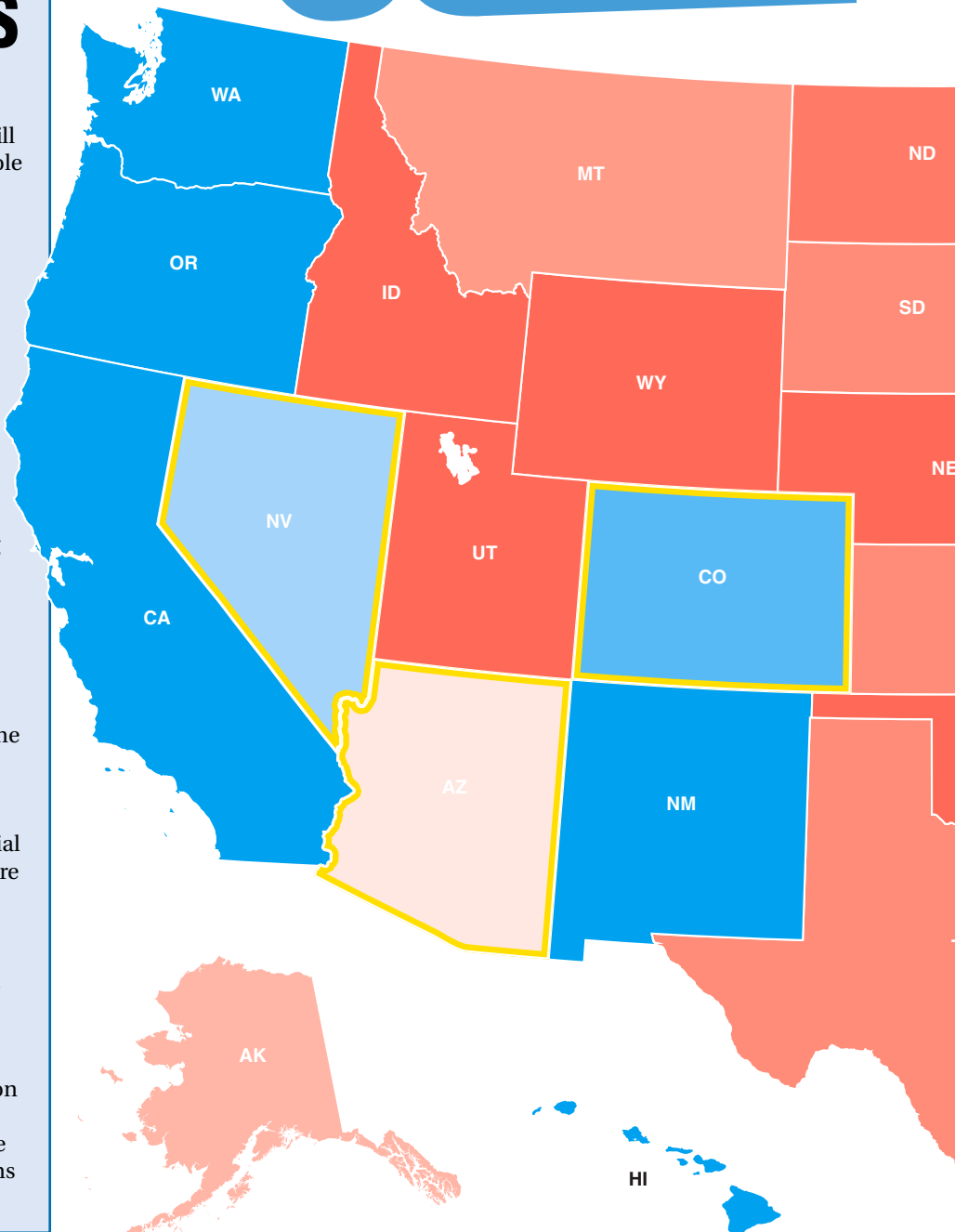
Since 2014 Republicans have held control of the Senate with a majority of 54. Of the 34 seats up for election, 10 are currently Democrat-held and 24 Republican. The Democrats need to net four seats among the 34 seats being contested to win a majority.

Elections will also be held to elect representatives to the House of Representatives from all 435 congressional districts across each of the 50 states. A total of 218 seats are needed for a majority; at the moment the Republicans hold a majority, with 247 seats.

Also up for grabs on 8 November are 12 state governorships and two territorial governorships, the contests for which are known as gubernatorial elections.

Who runs some of America's biggest cities will also be decided with 46 of the 100 largest cities holding municipal elections. Although Republicans only control about a quarter of mayorships in America's big cities, 44% of those Republican mayors are up for re-election in 2016.

In addition to these elections there are numerous other state and local elections being contested at the same time.



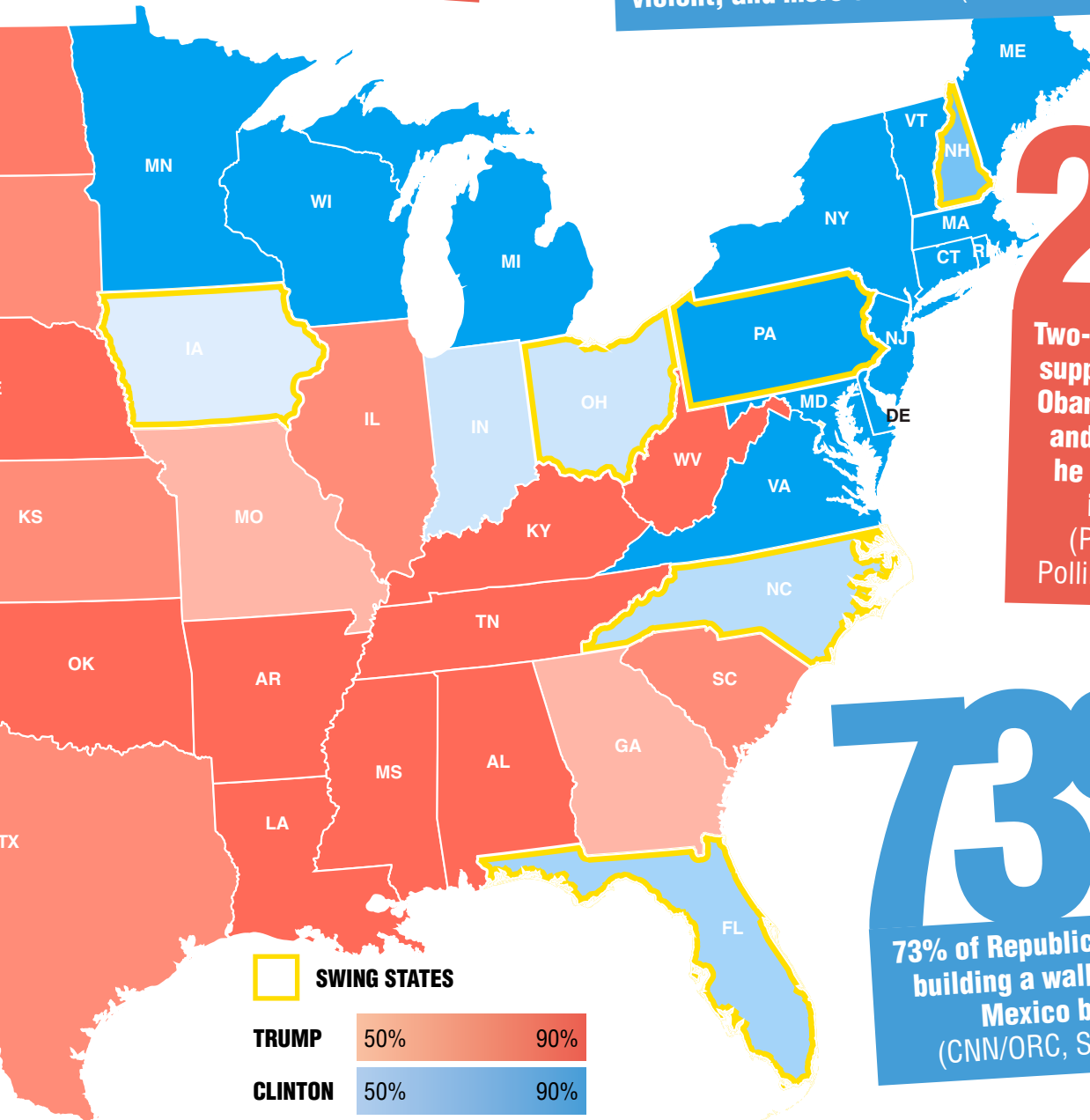
DIVIDED

9 OUT OF 10

9 out of 10 Trump supporters are white and over 60% don't have a college degree
(The Atlantic/Morning Consult Sept 2016)

40%-50%

Between 40% – 50% of Trump supporters believe that when compared to whites, black people are one of the following: less intelligent, more lazy, more rude, more violent, and more criminal (Reuters/Ipsos, Mar/Apr '16)



2/3

Two-thirds of Trump supporters believe Obama is a Muslim and 59% believe he was not born in the USA
(Public Policy Polling, May 2016)

73%

73% of Republicans support building a wall at the US-Mexico border
(CNN/ORC, Sept 2016)

Rigging the system

How new state voter laws are being used to suppress the votes of low income and minority communities.

EVEN BEFORE a vote is cast, the US electoral system has been slanted to support one party or the other in a way that can heavily influence the outcome of an election.

It is hard for British people to comprehend just how politicised and partisan the electoral system is in the U.S. In contrast to Britain, where an impartial electoral commission and boundary commission creates the electoral rules – albeit under guidance from the government of the day – in the US the decisions and rules are created at a state level.

So, whoever controls that state legislature can shape the rules of the election. In recent years the Republican Party has used its powers to create electoral rules for its own political advantage.

While the Republicans will claim these measures are to stop voter fraud and abuse of the system, detractors say they are little more than voter suppression, with the distinct aim of making it harder for low income and minority communities to cast a vote.

In 2012 Florida's Republican Governor Rick Scott reduced the early voting period from 14 days to eight days, reduced the number of early voting booth locations and, on election day itself, had fewer polling booths in poorer communities which led to people having to queue for up to six hours in order to vote.

In fact, with rules stating that people were allowed to vote after the official close of polls if they were in the queue, the last person to cast a vote in downtown Miami did so at 1.30am. This was five-and-a-half hours after the Florida polls closed and was even after Mitt Romney had formally conceded defeat.

It has been claimed that 15,000 people did not vote after being put off by long queues, which in a very tight marginal state like Florida could have been crucial.

The reduction in early voting days could well have impacted on even more people, with those in poorer communities often relying on early voting because of longer and more inflexible working hours, hindering people getting to the polls on election day itself.



The wait for voters at a polling location in Miami's Brickell neighborhood grew to a staggering seven hours on Election Day.

Penalising the Poor

Even before Scott tinkered with the electoral system the rules were already penalising poorer communities. Florida is one of three states to have a life-long ban on voting for anyone with a criminal conviction, the other two being Iowa and Virginia – two other key swing states.

For Florida, according to the Sentencing Project, this means that 10.4% of adults are not allowed to vote. The overwhelming majority of these are African Americans drawn from poorer neighbourhoods.

If this wasn't bad enough, right-wing conservative groups regularly run campaigns to dissuade people from voting. Again in Florida, many Latino voters received official looking letters questioning their immigration status and their right to vote. In other instances people received robocalls (automated calls) which said the election was on a different day.

In both instances Governor Scott took no action to stop this clear abuse of the system.

The Democrats, along with immigrant rights organisations and advocacy groups, fought a rearguard action in the courts ahead of the 2012 elections to limit the scope of these voter suppression changes. They were successful in many states.

However, a 2013 Supreme Court ruling in the *Shelby County* case gutted the most powerful protections of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which had been introduced to enshrine the rights of

African American communities to vote, including the section requiring federal preclearance before States could change its voting rules. This gave the green light to a wave of new state legislation that many saw as blatant attempts at voter suppression.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, 14 states have introduced new restrictive voting laws in effect for the first time in 2016. This takes the number of states which have introduced new restrictive voting laws since 2010 to 20.

Some, like Florida, have altered the early voting period but most have introduced new ID requirements to register and even for on-the-day voting. Advocacy groups say these clearly disadvantage poorer and minority communities, especially those where English might not be the first language.

Those proposing changes to voter rules claim they are required to limit voter fraud but according to the Brennan Center, which is run out of New York University's School of Law, the rate of voter fraud incident was between 0.00004 percent and 0.0009 percent. A figure insignificant enough to have no impact on the outcome of any election.

As this magazine goes to print Florida is being battered by Hurricane Matthew, but despite millions of people being evacuated from their homes over what was the final weekend to register to vote, Governor Scott has refused to extend the registration period.

Even natural disasters are being used to suppress voting. ●

One of every 40 American adults cannot vote in November's election because of state laws that bar people with past felony convictions from casting ballots. This rises to one in eight for African Americans. Data *Brennan Center for Justice*

SOUTH DAKOTA: In 2012 it was made harder to restore voting rights to people with past criminal convictions.

NEBRASKA: New restriction in place for 2016: Reduced early voting period.

KANSAS: New restriction in place for 2016: Documentary proof of citizenship required to register using the state registration form. But, by court order, certain individuals who registered without showing documentary proof must be permitted to vote. In 2012 Photo ID required to vote was introduced.

WISCONSIN: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID required to vote. Past recent restrictions: 2012 – Restriction on individual voter registration. 2014 – reduced early voting hours on weekdays and eliminated them entirely on weekends, however this change is currently on hold after a July 2016 trial court decision finding the restrictions were intentionally racially discriminatory.

IOWA: Restriction in place for 2012 presidential election: Made it harder to restore voting rights to people with past criminal convictions.

ILLINOIS: In place 2012 voter registration drives were curbed.

OHIO: New restrictions in place for 2016: Cut early voting and changed absentee and provisional ballot rules.

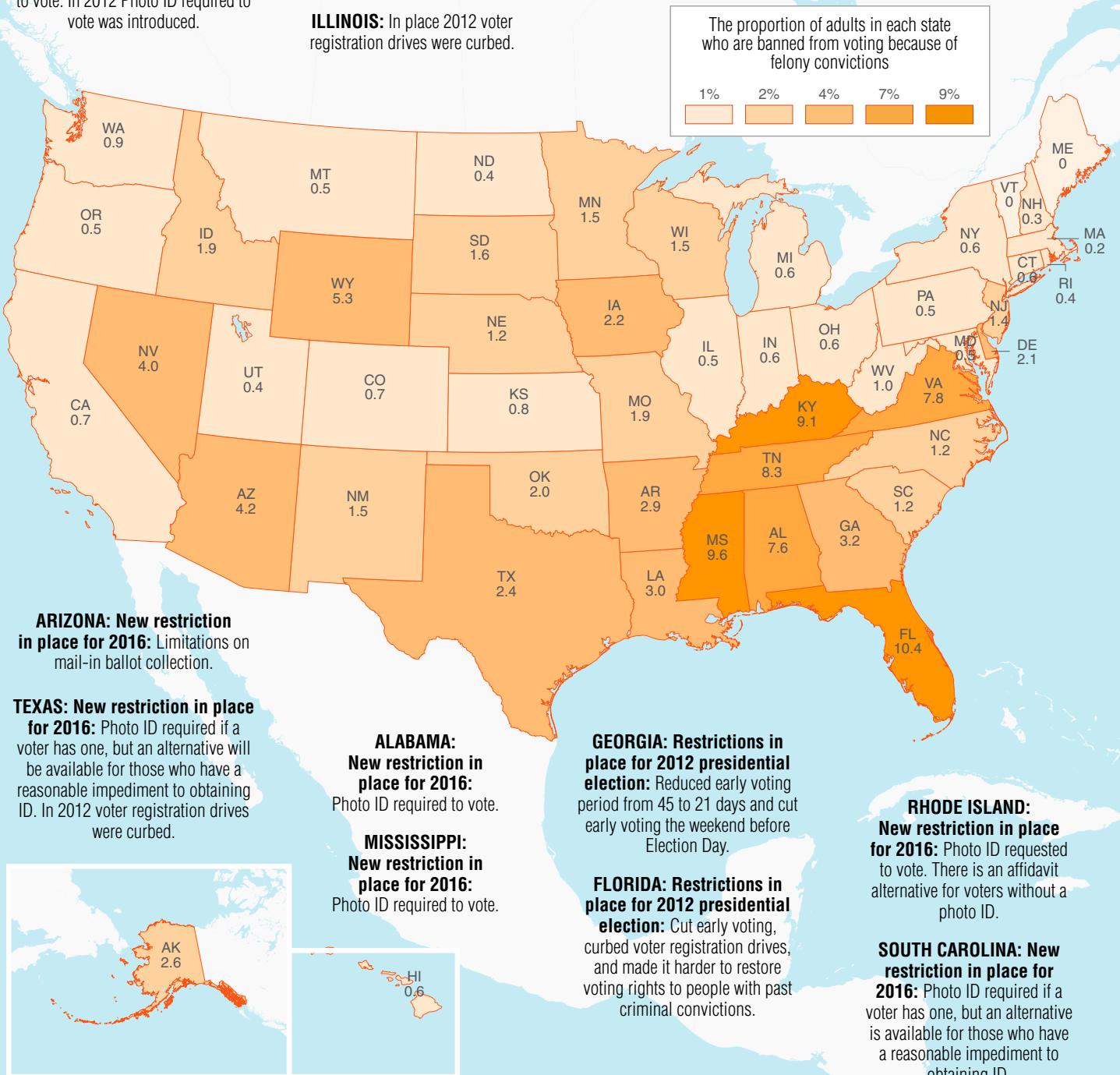
INDIANA: New restriction in place for 2016: Allows additional party-nominated election officers to demand voters provide proof of identification.

TENNESSEE: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID required to vote. In 2012 presidential election: Reduced early voting period and proof of citizenship required to register.

WEST VIRGINIA: In 2012 presidential election the early voting period was reduced from 17 to 10 days.

VIRGINIA: New restrictions in place for 2016: Photo ID required to vote and limits on third-party voter registration.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID requested to vote. The law requires voters without acceptable ID to get photographed at the polls, and the photograph will be affixed to an affidavit.



ARIZONA: New restriction in place for 2016: Limitations on mail-in ballot collection.

TEXAS: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID required if a voter has one, but an alternative will be available for those who have a reasonable impediment to obtaining ID. In 2012 voter registration drives were curbed.

ALABAMA: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID required to vote.

MISSISSIPPI: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID required to vote.

GEORGIA: Restrictions in place for 2012 presidential election: Reduced early voting period from 45 to 21 days and cut early voting the weekend before Election Day.

FLORIDA: Restrictions in place for 2012 presidential election: Cut early voting, curbed voter registration drives, and made it harder to restore voting rights to people with past criminal convictions.

RHODE ISLAND: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID requested to vote. There is an affidavit alternative for voters without a photo ID.

SOUTH CAROLINA: New restriction in place for 2016: Photo ID required if a voter has one, but an alternative is available for those who have a reasonable impediment to obtaining ID.

Fighting for

Nick Lowles meets the union members who are going door-to-door to make the case against Trump

“GOOD MORNING MA’AM, I am here on behalf of the Steelworkers Union and I was wondering if you had decided how you are planning to vote in November?”

Lindsay Patterson pauses, trying to give a reassuring smile. The woman he is speaking to on the doorstep quietly says she will probably vote Democrat, but there clearly is not much enthusiasm in her voice.

Lindsay follows a script which is very focused on bread-and-butter economic issues. As an African American he knows only too well why Trump should be opposed, but his job is not just to get Clinton elected but to convince people to vote for the Democrat candidate for the key Senate seat of Pennsylvania.

And he’s not finding it easy. While most people he meets have no time for Trump, there is little interest in the election and almost no knowledge about Katie McGinty, the Democratic candidate for the Senate.

Across the other side of the state Lindsay’s union, the United Steelworkers (USW), is on the road too, holding town hall and workplace meetings for members and their families to encourage turnout in the election.

This direct approach is one favoured by most unions in the US. “The member-

to-member conversations is the core of what we do,” says Michael Podhorzer, the political director of the AFL-CIO, the US equivalent of our TUC, which represents 12 million workers. While the organisation will be using social media on a bigger scale than before, nothing substitutes directly talking to people.

“Our most powerful tool is one person talking to another,” Podhorzer says. “The internet and TV are saturated with adverts these days and they are increasingly ignored by people. Unions have enormous credibility on economic issues with their members and the best way for us to engage is to get members talking to members.

“The social media work is just on top.”

Citizens United

While the media focus is firmly on the Trump vs Clinton, Republican vs Democrat battles, US elections see a whole swathe of organisations and interest groups pressing the case for or against a candidate or party. While this has always been the case, the 2010 Citizens United ruling, which allowed groups outside the political parties to spend an unlimited amount of money to try to influence voters, has dramatically sped up this process.



USW activist Lindsay Patterson on the doorstep in south Philadelphia

their future



Over \$1 billion was spent by non-party organisations in the 2012 US elections, a three-fold increase on the 2008 election. Over \$600 million of this was spent by so-called SuperPACs, political action committees which emerged as a consequence of the Citizens United ruling but which cannot coordinate with candidates or political parties.

This election will see an even bigger intervention. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, as of 5 October, there were 2,331 registered SuperPACs who together had already raised \$1.1 billion of which they had spent \$683 million. With a month still to go these figures will only grow.

One of the largest SuperPACs in this election is For Our Future, set up by 10 trade unions, several of whom have come together to coordinate their work and pool their money. While the AFL-CIO, had a SuperPAC in 2012 this is the first time it has opened itself up to collaborating with non-union funding sources, with Tom Steyer, a billionaire who is both strongly anti-Trump but also a keen environmental advocate, being the most high-profile addition.

However, it has not been without controversy. Eight unions representing

building trades workers are angry at the involvement of Steyer for his campaign against the Keystone XL pipeline, which they said cost their members work.

With the unions struggling to cope with strong anti-union legislation brought in by Republicans, joining forces with a wider progressive movement was generally seen as a positive move.

Unions & Immigrants

The alliance between unions and new immigrant communities has also been strengthened during this election cycle. This growing working relationship is good news for the union movement, which has been struggling with declining membership for many years.

Ten years ago the union movement bitterly opposed immigration reform but the combination of a dynamic leader in Richard Trumka, increasing union recruitment and organising within new migrant communities and the involvement of immigrants in the union movement, means that a very different approach is now being taken.

The AFL-CIO, and Trumka personally, is active in the calls for comprehensive immigration reform which includes a pathway to citizenship and will represent

new immigrants in the workplace regardless of legal status.

In a further encouraging sign of the changing labor movement in the US, the AFL-CIO's new executive vice-president is Tefere Gebre, who was born in Ethiopia and came to the US as a political refugee at the age of 15, having walked for 93 days across the Sudan desert to get to safety.

For Our Future is set on spending \$50 million in this electoral cycle, with its main focus being on the key swing states of Pennsylvania, Florida, Ohio, Nevada and Wisconsin. However, the AFL-CIO is keen to stress that they will be campaigning in every state in the country.

Supplementing the SuperPAC will be the work of Working America, a campaign set up by the AFL-CIO in 2003, which targets a wider community outreach and boasts over two million members across the country.

This huge spend reflects the seriousness with which the union movement is taking the election. "The stakes are huge," Podhorzer told HOPE not hate. "You have Donald Trump who wants to destroy unions, lower wages and has a history of sending American jobs abroad."

"If he was elected President he would give the key jobs of running the economy to his fellow billionaires and that would be a disaster for union members."

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka is even more direct. "He is also a bigot," he told union members in Florida in

“You see, Trump says he’s with the American working class, but when you look close, it’s just hot air.”

early March. "From his anti-American proposal to ban Muslims to his horrendous comments about women and immigrants, Trump is running on hate. It seems the only group he won't criticize is the KKK."

"Those statements and positions are bad enough," he said. "But what's getting less attention is how Donald Trump really feels about working people."

While Podhorzer is bullish about how union members are responding to the AFL-CIO's message, there is no disguising the appeal of Trump to blue collar workers.

Research conducted by Working America at the turn of the year highlighted Trump's appeal among union members and working class communities more generally. Its polling, based on questioning 1,689 likely voters in small towns outside Cleveland, Ohio, and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, found that a quarter of those who supported the Democrats in 2012 were now favouring Trump.

Unsurprisingly, almost a third of respondents cited the economy and good jobs as their most important issue, whilst just five percent said immigration. However, this increased to 14 percent among those who were going to vote for Trump.

A more encouraging finding was that many who indicated support for Trump could be won back by careful engagement.

"Thoughtful conversations with trusted messengers can move voters away from right-wing populism to a different take on the issues," the report concluded.

"Providing them with an independent source to help them sort through the deluge of information through a unique communications channel – face-to-face engagement – is critical to that evolution."

This is obviously what the unions are trying to do.

Podhorzer sees a big difference between union members and non-union



AFL-CIO leader Richard Trumka (right) shows his support for HOPE not hate

members, with the former much more likely to oppose Trump's message. Podhorzer told HOPE not hate that he put that down to union members being used to hearing a counter-voice to anti-immigrant and populist rhetoric, while non-union workers might not.

"Many blue collar workers not in a union see this election as a reality show and don't see that there is a reality after the election," he says with some frustration.

Electoral rules mean the unions have to run very separate campaigns from the Democrats and this gives them a degree of impartiality and credibility among their members. By scoring candidates on key union issues, the unions can very clearly explain who one candidate is better than another and ensuring that Democrats cannot take union support for granted.

In a few places this has led to the unions backing Republican candidates in electoral races lower down the ticket.

The literature distributed by unions over here differs from what we are used to in

the UK. It is mainly focused around union issues, tries to lead the reader to a conclusion without preaching or instructing and sources all the claims it contains.

Another difference is that in addition to having direct contact with union members the unions also target other voters in union households. Sharing membership data between unions means that union activists can work together in a neighbourhood and target all union households.

Challenges ahead

Delivering the union message on the doorstep is proving difficult however and not helped by the general dissatisfaction with the political system, the direction of the economy and a lack of enthusiasm for Hillary Clinton. "The country is polarized," says Podhorzer. People want change but many have given up on the dysfunctional political system."

The unions are even struggling to mobilise their own activists. Our labor mobilisation attracted 50 people, fewer than at a similar

stage of the 2008 and 2012 election cycle.

Many union activists voted for Bernie Sanders and even with the threat of Trump many have not enthusiastically moved over to Hillary. While they will vote for her, few seem prepared to put in the work.

And that is privately unsettling a lot of the union leadership.

The mood on the ground is difficult to say the least. While Trump's repeatedly offensive comments have subdued many of his supporters and even turned women away from his campaign, the lack of enthusiasm amongst union members is creating concerns about turnout.

Certainly Lindsay Patterson was in a downbeat mood after finishing his round. A veteran of many election campaigns, he says that he had not experienced such a flat atmosphere for many years.

While most commentators now anticipate a Clinton victory, a low turnout could hamper the Democrat's ability to win down ballot races and this could affect its chances of retaking the Senate and some state legislatures.

A Clinton victory in November is by no means the end of the campaign for the AFL-CIO. In fact, it will be the beginning of a new phase. "Government is not going to fix the problems by itself," says Podhorzer. "They will only change if they are forced to."

And if there is one positive to come out of this election campaign it is the cooperation between unions and progressives, largely propelled by the threat of Trump. "We need to keep this going between elections," Podhorzer adds. "If we can do that then we can force change for the better."

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Organising the most exploited

Matthew Collins

THEY ARE THE most exploited in American society and yet they are also the target of anger, hostility and resentment. Counted in their millions, many live precarious lives doing the jobs that others refuse to do, often in appalling conditions for very little pay. All the while they fear a knock on the door from the authorities.

There are an estimated 11 million undocumented people in the United States. They are those who entered the country illegally, came on holiday or entered as students, and never returned.

One organisation that is fighting for their rights is the National Guestworker Alliance (NGA), established in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed much of New Orleans. Thousands of workers were brought in to help rebuild the city and many experienced the most appalling exploitation at the hands of employers and gangmasters.

In June, the NGA released a report into the conditions faced by US seafood workers.

The report focused on the experiences of undocumented and H2-B visa (temporary seasonal) workers in the shrimp and seafood industries.

Around three-quarters of those processing shrimp were either HB-2 or undocumented immigrant workers, just over 7,000 people in total.

The report documented how some workers were forced to live in trailers of up to 20 people at a time and paid as little as \$2 (£1.57) per hour, suffering from sexual harassment, physical abuse and even deportation should they complain about conditions.

And yet despite their awful exploitation, these people have become the target of Trump's anger and the resentment of many Americans.

Julie Sipp currently organises around 18,000 guest and undocumented workers for the NGA. She told HOPE not hate that Donald Trump has been a keen employer of guest workers and those on the H2-B visa programme on his construction programmes. Because NGA is non-profit and Trump is at best litigious, Sipp chose to speak to us as an individual rather than on behalf of the organisation.

"He [Trump] is also fanning the flames of fears of immigrants and fanning the flames of racial hatred that

would be devastating not just for guest workers, but also for African Americans."

Sipp says that the American working rhetoric has pitted white working class workers against workers of colour for hundreds of years and that Trump has now tapped into this, in the most 'brilliant' fashion. The language is, according to Sipp, nothing new, but Trump has finally found and hit the nerve at the right time.

"Trump benefited from cashing in on his semi-ridiculous persona. The other Republican candidates just never knew how to do that, and he was more willing to be overtly extreme and racist in a way that superseded the simple dog whistle politics. And some in this country were receptive to that..."

Sipp points to some other factors in the American political landscape: notably, appeal. Not since Lindon B Johnson has a Democrat won the majority of white votes. A Republican has never won the majority of black votes. This being the case, Hillary Clinton may be best served, says Sipp, in appealing and focussing more on African American workers and Latino voters.

"Brown is the new white," she says quoting the book by Steve Philips.

"Progressive people of colour now make up 29 percent of the entire U.S. population, and progressive whites make up 26 percent of the population."

However, even here, Trump has sought to exploit the economic hardships and insecurity of the country's African American community, many of whom are now struggling.

While Trump's promise to expel all 11 million undocumented people is clearly of immediate concern, people like Sipp know that there will still be much work to do if Clinton is elected.

Migrant workers in Yuma County, Arizona
Photo: Peter Haden

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God, Guns

Joe Mulhall joins the Borderkeepers of Alabama on the lookout for cartel drug mules, “illegal immigrants” and Muslims on US/Mexican border



s and Guts



“God, Gun’s and Guts built this country.”

THESE WERE PRETTY much the first words I heard as I entered the large Quonset hut, a semi-circular steel building made of silver corrugated steel. Eight foldout camp beds stood in a line, most with a semi-automatic AR15 assault rifle lying neatly on them.

‘Cornbread’ was the founder of The Borderkeepers of Alabama (BOA), a heavily armed vigilante group which claimed to have 1000 members. Small groups of activists drive 30 hours from Alabama to the America/Mexico border to intercept cartel drug smugglers and to stop (what they view as) illegal and Muslim immigration across America’s southern border.

Cornbread was an imposing figure with a white handlebar moustache, camouflage headband, a bulbous stomach and a .45 Glock pistol strapped to his leg at all times. Like everyone in the BOA he spoke with a distinctive Alabama drawl, with the lyrical, drawn-out vowels never letting you forget he is a son of the American South. Even when dressed in his full battle gear and armed to the teeth his habit of addressing everyone as ‘brother’ or ‘cuz’ (cousin) made his a softer, more approachable character than some of the other men.

He set up BOA a little over a year-and-a-half ago and I was accompanying them on their seventh trip to the border, this time in the desert of southern New Mexico.

BOA stringently denies that it is a militia, as it doesn’t engage in wider anti-government work and instead focuses solely on the border. However it shares much of the same ideology and cooperates in joint operations with several militias. In addition, some of their members and activists (including several with me in New Mexico) are also active within other militia groups.

Some class themselves as Three Percenters, an anti-government resistance movement named after the claim that three percent of the American population engaged in armed resistance against the British during the American Revolution.

Motivation

Whatever you think you about BOA, there is no doubting the commitment to the cause. Activists give up huge amounts of time and money, often taking unpaid time off work or using their one week of holiday a year, to drive thousands of miles and place themselves at possible risk for what they believe is their patriotic duty. ‘Bama’, a tall thin gunsmith with square spectacles, explained: ‘We are brought up to be patriots to this country, we love our country... We believe in our Constitution and that’s why we want to stand there and make sure it is enforced.’

For people like Bama, the border issue is symptomatic of a wider attack on their constitutional rights. But why the border issue above all others? ‘There is a war going on on this border’ explained Bama.

‘To put it bluntly, our country is being invaded... We are the wall, for now,’ reiterated Cornbread.

Rocky, a Walmart employee from rural Alabama and the youngest on the operation, summed up the motivation of the rest of the group. ‘You’ve got thousands of illegals pouring in. You’ve got drugs. You’ve got sex trade. All kind of horrible things like that coming in... Somebody has got to stand up and do something.’

However, some saw these issues as secondary to the primary mission – which was (in their view) about national security. ‘A lot of people associate what we are doing with illegal Mexicans,’ said Doc, an ex-law enforcement officer with muscles in his spit, an ammunition vest unzipped and a rifle over his shoulder looking every inch a life-size G.I. Joe action figure. While he too wanted to stop Latino immigration and drug smugglers his primary driver was combatting a supposed stream of Muslims sneaking across the Mexican border. ‘We’re having groups associated with ISIS crossing over the Mexican border... You can’t just take a group like Islam and invade America and expect to win.’

When I asked Bama if Muslims really



were crossing the southern border, he responded: 'It is a problem. There are a lot of Muslims coming across the border. We have no problem with people doing, like I said, legally, but these guys are terrorists coming into our country to do harm to American citizens and that we cannot allow.'

While a small number of people from Middle Eastern countries have been detained after crossing the border none have been definitively tied to ISIS. The fact-checking website politifact.com has investigated this claim and stated that 'there's no evidence that terrorists linked to ISIS have crossed the border, and many public safety officials have said flatly that it hasn't happened.' However, as I was to find during my time in the desert, facts held no sway over these vigilantes and conspiracy theories about Muslims, liberals, Obama and the media formed the centrepiece of their worldview.

The Operation

The 'operation' was to last 72 hours. While driving across the desolate expanses of West Texas they had stopped at a Waffle House and midway through tucking into gargantuan portions of unhealthy food a stranger convinced them to head to New Mexico, rather than their original destination in Arizona. A local land owner had erected a Quonset hut which was part-social club for bikers and part-base camp for militia and 'patriot' groups on border operations in the area. It sat in a valley between two dusty mountains that ran perpendicular to the Mexican border, making the valley a thoroughfare for smugglers and immigrants on their way to the nearest interstate highway.

We were a good 40 miles from the actual border. My initial thoughts were that the chances of bumping into any smugglers or undocumented immigrants this far from the actual border were slim to none.... How wrong I was.

Not long after arriving I heard one of the guys outside with binoculars shout 'glass on glass' and a few of the others jumped up, grabbed their guns and left the shade of the hut. They claimed to have located an armed cartel 'spotter' on the hill a few miles away watching BOA's camp. I looked through the binoculars and sure enough up on the hill was a man with a gun looking straight back; hence 'glass on glass'.

The youngest member of the group floated the idea of a 'black op' to go up an 'take him out' but he was soon castigated by Cornbread, who told him anyone breaking the law would be thrown out.

Though well out of firing range, the incident certainly made the whole thing feel less like a friendly camping trip and more like the war they'd been telling me about.

The daytimes were deeply unpleasant, with the baking desert heat and swarms of flies making sleep hard to come by. Mostly the BOA men just sat around chatting, taking turns looking for spotters and eating and drinking.

Nighttime

As dusk approached everyone began suiting up for the nighttime operation. They wore full camouflage gear with heavy bulletproof armoured vests, a medical kit, compass, knife, flashlight and a hydration pack on their back.

Everyone typically carried an AR15 semi-automatic assault rifle along with a pistol strapped to their leg. Glocks seemed to be the sidearm of choice but being British I was offered a Walther PPK, à la James Bond (I politely declined). Some such as Rocky, the youngest of the group, carried a third 'backup gun' inside their vest while Cornbread opted for a shotgun and a belt of shells. Finally, they stuffed every remaining pouch and pocket with enough ammunition to start a small war.

Most loaded their guns with hollow-point or ballistic-tipped bullets which were purposely designed to cause maximum damage. As they so often told me, if they ended up in a firefight they were prepared to kill.

As if the chances of a deadly gun battles with Mexican cartels weren't

enough, the environment around us added extra danger. The desert was crawling with snakes and this area was home to the particularly dangerous and aggressive Mojave rattlesnake, one of the most venomous in the world. Our isolated location and complete lack of phone signal meant any bite would likely be fatal.

Across the 72-hour trip there were three night operations, starting at about 9pm and lasting until the early hours. Having scoped out the area during the first day three groups of two men (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie) headed out in the pitch dark – some with night vision, some not – and took up locations at points that made up a triangle.

The idea was that any cartel drug runners, undocumented immigrants or – as some believed – Islamic State-supporting terrorists would walk into the triangle and then be pounced upon and temporarily detained until the official border police arrived to take over.

Back at base or FOB (Forward Operating Base) was Cornbread and the operation leader Bull.

Bull was an ex-marine and now bounty hunter with a sideline in high-value security. He was an intimidating and guarded character, heavy set, shaved head and driving a huge armoured black truck that looked military issue. Of everyone there he was the most suspicious of my presence and after hearing about Britain's restrictive gun and knife laws would earnestly tell me how: 'Y'all need to take your country back!'

He planned and ran the actual nighttime operations and clearly got a

The Nativist Extremist Movement



While BOA members would class themselves as 'Patriots', their politics are 'nativist', believing in protecting the interests of native-born inhabitants over and above those of immigrants. BOA also makes up part of what is termed the nativist extremist movement.

The Southern Poverty Law Centre (SPLC), a civil rights organisation based in Alabama, defines the movement as 'anti-immigration organizations that go beyond mere advocacy to confront suspected undocumented immigrants and those who hire or help them'. The movement peaked in 2010 with some 319 active groups but according to the SPLC has dropped to just 17 in 2016.

Also active in America is the dangerous militia movement, which is actually on the rise: there were some 276 active militias identified by the SPLC in early 2016. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) defines the militia movement as a 'right-wing extremist movement consisting of armed paramilitary groups, both formal and informal, with an anti-government, conspiracy-oriented ideology.'

kick out of it. Like many who were ex-military or ex-law enforcement it clearly gave back some of the buzz they were missing since returning to civvy street.

Each night I went out as part of Bravo team with Bama and Doc. We found a position, took cover and waited. For hours it felt like chasing fire flies, with every tiny moving light or distant dog bark radioed in to FOB as a possible sighting.

Just as I was starting to think the whole thing was an elaborate game a garbled message came in from Alpha team. Five Mexcian men were less than 10 meters in front of them. Being first timers to the desert Alpha team failed to spring the trap as planned and the five men walked straight past them and up onto the nearest highway, where we eventually saw cars drive them away.

When asked why they failed to act Rocky was honest and explained: 'I pretty much buried my face in the dirt, scared'. Snake, his partner agreed explaining, 'When you go out here and there is no moon, there's no stars and everything sets in on you and you realise these people have guns also, it becomes real... The shit gets real.'

The operation had failed but one thing had been confirmed: this was indeed an active highway for people secretly crossing the border.

The second night saw more activity, this time the group did 'light them up' (shine torches on people and shout for them to stop). The shock of the lights sent the smugglers/immigrants running and the whole of the BOA team set out in a 'spread pattern' with a view to forcing them towards 'Mobile 1', the name given to Bull and his truck. You could see fresh footprints in the dried up river beds that indicated the direction of travel but despite the best efforts of BOA they snuck past them again and up to the waiting cars that sat on the highway.

A Star Arrives

Things then took a turn for the surreal when we headed back towards base. A car was spotted with its lights on right near the group's camp. Doc cocked his gun and the team readied themselves for an ambush, presuming it was a pickup vehicle waiting for drugs or people.

However, instead of finding gun-toting drug smugglers we came across a fat, older American gentleman sat in a pickup truck with his patently dyed pitch black hair half covered by a baseball cap with the words 'God, Guns and Guts' emblazoned bellow a golden eagle.

My relief at not being caught in the middle of a firefight was matched by the group's excitement as they realised who

the new arrival was: Johnny Horton Jr, son of the world famous country singer, Johnny Horton, and a relatively well-known singer himself.

He was a mightily peculiar figure who would one minute happily sing you a song he co-wrote with Jonny Cash and then the next swear blind that Elvis was alive and living in Hawaii; he went as far as to get him on the phone! However, he was also the commander of a militia group called the United Constitutional Patriots and had come down to lend a hand and donate a four-wheeled dirt bike to BOA for future desert operations.

*“If the civil war
kicks off the first
thing we're gonna do
is wipe out those
mosques”*

Cooperation with Border Patrol

More surprising than the arrival of a famous country singer was the arrival of the official Border Patrol officers. With BOA being an extremely heavily-armed nativist extremist group, I had (naively) presumed the authorities would be at pains to distance themselves from such vigilante activity.

However, the officers that turned up were genuinely pleased to see BOA. They talked amiably and openly expressed their gratitude for the work they were doing. 'Hey, we are all Americans here,' one of them said. They were even told to call the local border patrol office and explain their plans to avoid overlapping with the activities of the official operations.

A previous mission nearly ended in calamity when BOA activists and official border patrol officers mistook each other for armed cartel members and narrowly avoided a fire fight. Both groups were screaming at each other for a while in Mexican, during a tense armed standoff.

Cornbread's claim that the BOA now worked closely with the official border patrol while out on operations seemed, shockingly, to be true.

Such collaboration is more common than you would think. A report by The Centre for New Community in Chicago has previously exposed how: 'For at least a decade, some Department of Homeland Security (DHS) union leaders and employees have been colluding with the organized anti-immigration movement.'

Wider Politics

Talking to them, it seemed most of the BOA men were united by an acute sense of moral and national decline. They appeared united in a belief that white, male Christians were 'under attack' and believed that their traditional way of life was being eroded by the advancement of a liberal and left wing agenda. 'Honestly, I am really worried. We have been going downhill for a while,' explained Rocky.

'For reasons I'm not sure I understand we are being told that for a long time we have been offending certain people. Whether it's subjects like homosexuality, Christian, Muslim, rights, our rights... Why all of a sudden are we expected to tolerate things we've never tolerated before and we don't get a say so in it?' said Doc.

When I asked if he felt Christians were under attack, he didn't hesitate to reply: 'Absolutely, oh absolutely.'

In a similar vein Snake, an ex-Navy seaman and one of the few non-Alabamians in the group who made the journey from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, articulated the view of all those there: 'Right now the white American male is under attack and if you are Christian you have an extra burden placed on you.'

The erosion of white Christian dominance appeared deeply painful for them and the last eight years under Obama had, they felt, brought America to a crisis point. 'Obama has sacrificed in almost eight years everything that so many people have worked for,' continued Snake. Similarly, Bama said: 'Our country is in a dire position. We have come to a fork in the road and we must choose'.

During the long hot days talk invariably turned to politics and every conversation eventually meandered its way towards how 'liberals' were ruining America. The vitriolic hatred for 'liberals' – a term used in its broadest possible sense to include all Democrats, some Republicans and the whole of the mainstream press – was extreme.

To wide approval, Razor, a short plump man who prided himself on being something of a ladies' man, stated: 'The biggest dividing line in this country is no longer black/white, north/south or east/west. It's Republican/Democrat.' The Democrats were no longer a political party that they disagreed with, but actually all-out traitors bent on destroying America.

Special anger was reserved for President Obama – or 'that nigger in the Whitehouse' as he was once casually referred to over lunch. The ills of America and the world, big or small, were repeatedly placed squarely at his feet.

Most were convinced he was a Muslim, of course.



Pizza, Moonshine and Race War

On the final day of the trip and with supplies of Vienna sausages running low it was decided that a group would drive the 30 miles to the nearest town to get pizza. I accompanied Snake, his brother 'Fang', Bama and Doc on the drive and steered the conversation once again towards Obama and the state of the nation.

The conversation followed its usual trajectory until Bama expressed a genuine fear that a second civil war was imminent. I asked around to see if the others agreed and no-one ruled out the idea. We arrived at the petrol station and while perusing the confectionary isle Bama came over and proceeded to outline exactly what the coming civil war would look like.

In his view the war would have three prongs: a racial element (black vs white), a political element (liberal vs conservative), and a religious element (Muslim and non-believers vs Christians). The liberals would fight with black people and Muslims as allies against white Christians. He leaned in close and hushed his voice and in a half whisper said: 'If the civil war kicks off the first thing we're gonna do is wipe out those mosques'. The extremeness of his comments didn't register at first. Here, surrounded by kids buying candy, Bama

“ Right now the white American male is under attack and if you are Christian you have an extra burden placed on you. ”

was dispassionately outlining the nature of a coming race war.

Simultaneously terrified, disgusted and fascinated by such extreme racism coming from an otherwise ostensibly kind and gentle man, I decided to visit him at his home back in Alabama some weeks later to find out more about his violent ideas. Not a drinker himself, Bama pulled out a jam jar filled with 38-year-old genuine moonshine whisky and poured me a glass. After showing me his vast gun collection and piles of ammunition he lit a cigar and began to explain in detail his theories on race, Obama and once again the coming civil war.

For Bama, Obama was purposely stoking the fires of racial tension and actively encouraging race riots with a view to using the resulting crisis as an

excuse to declare marshal law, abolish the Constitution and stay in power. This would be the trigger for a second wave of successions by the southern states and the start of a second American civil war.

The idea that Obama was planning to stay in office beyond his term was a commonly-held one among BOA activists. Conspiracy theories on the topic were readily taken as bona fide possibilities.

What baffled me was that Bama claimed to have good friends who were black and when I questioned him how this was possible, given his views, he set about explaining how there was a difference between black people and 'niggers' – the latter were lazy, living off state handouts while selling drugs. The former supposedly lived in the local area and 'know their place'.

It was sickening to hear such explicit racism and hard because, on one level, I liked him: he seemed genuinely affectionate, kind and friendly. Yet his ugly extremism turned my stomach.

It is sometimes comforting to conceptualise racists, fascists and violent extremists as abstract monsters, but this was a valuable and scary reminder that they are, ostensibly, normal people. And yet anger and hatred can make normal people do terrible and violent things. ●

Lifting The Hood

Inside the most extreme Klan in America



HOPE not hate has spent more than a year infiltrating one of America's most notorious KKK groups, linked to stabbings, cross burnings and calling for President Obama to be hung

During a 15-month operation, HOPE not hate has managed to infiltrate one of the largest, most dangerous and extreme Ku Klux Klan (KKK) groups in North America, The Loyal White Knights of the KKK.

We can now blow the lid off this vile group, which has been behind stabbings of anti-fascists, cross burnings, nationwide leafletting, and calling for harm – even murder – against blacks and gays as well as President Obama.

Winning the trust of the group and building a relationship with the Klan's notorious and violent leader, Chris Barker, has allowed us to gather huge amounts of sensitive information about the Loyal White Knights, including pictures, names, addresses and contact details of hundreds of the group's members and prospective members.

Once inside we came across some of the worst racism we have ever encountered and learned about their dangerous racist ideology, encountering widespread Holocaust denial and witnessing a culture which encouraged extreme violence.

The Loyal White Knights of the KKK

Chris Barker founded the Loyal White Knights back in 2012. Since then the group has bragged about being 'the most active Klan in America'. Barker is hated by other prominent Klan leaders and has previously been expelled by three KKK groups due to his willingness to ally himself with neo-Nazis, something many within the Klan dislike.

He proved this willingness recently when he became part of the Aryan Nationalist Alliance, an extreme and eclectic coalition of white nationalist groups, racist skinheads and Klansmen, including notorious American activists and organisations such as the founder of Aryan Strikeforce, Josh Steever, and Matthew Heimbach's Traditionalist Worker Party. Heimbach is a notoriously extreme character who was banned from entering the UK in 2015 by then Home Secretary Theresa May due to his extreme homophobic, antisemitic and segregationist views.

Barker (aliases James Spears and Robert Jones) is also a dangerous criminal with a record spanning nearly two decades. He has been guilty of malicious arson, possession of stolen goods and larceny, as well as being charged with assault with a deadly weapon and assault on a woman.

After getting close to Barker and his wife we were eventually given access to details of and contact details for hundreds of the group's members, allowing us to build a true picture of the membership. Perhaps unsurprisingly the Loyal White Knights draws its strength from the southern states, with a sizeable membership base in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia and of course North Carolina, where the group is headquartered.

That said, the group draws members from across America, with pretty much an even spread across the Midwest and the East Coast region and a healthy number in California. They also



An offensive image shared by Klan members

have lone members in Southern Australia, the UK and British Columbia (Canada).

Violence

The Loyal White Knights is an extremely violent group which has been involved in bloody clashes during the past year.

In late February members of his group held an anti-immigration demonstration in Anaheim, California at which they revealed signs reading 'White Lives Matter'. During the ensuing confrontation with counter-protestors five people were injured and 13 arrested.

Just a few days after the fracas Barker emailed our infiltrator to brag and wrote, 'we just had a fight between our members and communist [sic] our members stabbed 3 in California'. Five KKK members were arrested following the vicious brawl but all were later released as they were said to be acting in self-defence.

Previously Barker was involved in the notorious plot to build a ray gun to kill Muslims which his co-conspirator described as 'Hiroshima on a light switch'.

According to digital media outlet ➡



VICE, the plan was hatched by Glendon Scott Crawford with the collaboration of Barker, until he was arrested on unrelated federal charges of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon – and turned FBI informant to save his own skin.

These are just a few extreme examples of the wider culture of violence we found once invited into the closed sections of group's website. Pictures of members with firearms or holding the hangman's noose, a symbol linked to the lynching of black people, were common place, as were jokes and memes about hanging and running over black people.

During the operation we were also sent resources including magazines and leaflets. Some simply showed a hooded figure with the words 'Our Race Is Our Nation' (a reference to infamous white power themes of groups such as the World Church of the Creator) while another attacked Jews and showed a hooded figure, backed by the Confederate Flag with the words, 'Help Save Our Race; Everything we cherish is under assault by ZOG' above it. ZOG is an abbreviation of 'Zionist Occupation Government' which is an antisemitic term and conspiracy theory that states that Jews secretly control world power.

However, the most extreme leaflet we were sent encouraged acts of violence against gay men. It showed two stick figures engaging in anal sex with the title 'Stop Aids: Support Gay Bashing.' Under the picture it read 'Homosexual Men And Their Sexual Acts Are Disgusting and Inhuman'. Not content with extreme and violent homophobia the leaflet finishes on a racist note reading, 'Ban Non-White Immigration. Outlaw Haitians – Deport Mud People'.

Extreme Racism and Race War

The Loyal White Knight's tendency towards violence is born from a toxic racist ideology. We saw long articles about 'How to be a nigger' and mocked-up pictures of Obama being hung. We were also given access to a list of members who were expelled from the Klan for violations ranging from drug use to sleeping with 'a JEW Whore' or sleeping with a Mexican, to watching Asian porn, or having a 'mixed child' and therefore being a 'RACE TRAITOR'.

An important part of the group's racism is extreme antisemitism. During our operation Barker wrote to us explaining his views on Jews. It 'is a shame what is going on with our mother Europe' he wrote. 'The Jews are also doing the same



(top) The Klan's notorious and violent leader, Chris Barker

(above) The most extreme leaflet we were sent encouraged acts of violence against gay men

here in America. They said there [sic] goal was to destroy the White Race. Here they are doing just that by brain washing our people through the media.'

He proceeded to deny the Holocaust, writing:

'Because here people still believe 6 million kikes were killed by the Germans. Even though scientists have proven only 1.2 million Jews died in Aushwitz [sic] camp. Mostly from disease plus American bombs we thought it was a German base. But now America pays and all of Europe pays billions to the evil state of Israel.'

However, not content to direct his ire solely at the Jews he also wrote to us about Muslims, explaining how he had heard that

Short History of the Ku Klux Klan

Origins of the Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was founded between late 1865 and the summer of 1866 by six former Confederate officers in the town of Pulaski, Tennessee. Originally formed as a social club, the members soon found that their nighttime horseplay in town caused fear among former slaves in the area.

The group rapidly expanded, which resulted in a meeting in April 1867 at which the organisation's rules and structure were decided. Standing in direct opposition to the extension of black rights the Klan engaged in a campaign of violence and murder against former slaves and black leaders.

However, following law enforcement suppression and internal fighting Nathan Bedford Forrest, Grand Wizard of the KKK, officially disbanded the organisation in the early 1870s.



KKK night rally in Chicago, c. 1920.
Photo Underwood & Underwood from wikipedia



Scene from the film *The Birth of a Nation*

Second KKK

In 1915 the Klan was revived by William J Simmons in Atlanta, Georgia, following the film release of *The Birth of a Nation*, a racist film that glorified the first incarnation of the KKK. This new reincarnation had a wider programme than its forbearer and added an extreme nativism, anti-Catholicism and antisemitism to its traditional white supremacism.

By 1921 the ranks of the Klan had swollen and some estimates placed the group's membership as high as four to five million, though in reality it was likely much smaller. However, at its peak it famously marched 40,000 uniformed Klansmen through the streets of Washington D.C. in 1924.

By the end of the decade membership had shrunk back to 30,000 as it broke into dozens of fragments, faced pressure from law enforcement and garnered a bad reputation for its violence and extremism.

1960s Onwards

The Klan emerged again in the 1960s to oppose the civil rights movement and to fight for the preservation of segregation. During this period, it once again engaged in terrorism and murder including the killing of four young girls in Birmingham, Alabama.

During this period the FBI and law enforcement agencies began to seriously monitor, infiltrate and disrupt the KKK. From the 1970s onwards it has been decentralised, fragmented and hugely weakened by internal conflicts, splits and a number of damaging court cases.

While it is no longer the united force it once was it still has the ability to engage in extreme acts of violence. According to the Southern Poverty Law Centre there were 190 competing Klans active in 2015.



Bomb explodes during Sunday morning services in the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama

The Loyal White Knights of the KKK adopt Nazi imagery and gestures

in Europe, 'the Muslims are raping our white women' and sent us literature about America's race war.

Down But Not Out

Thankfully the modern Klan movement is a shadow of its former self. Long gone are the days when they had as many as four million members and could stage huge demonstrations in Washington such as in the 1920s.

The Southern Poverty Law Centre estimates that there are between 5,000 and 8,000 Klan members active at the moment, split across dozens of different and sometimes competing Klan's.

Our investigation has shown that while the Klan may have diminished in size groups like the Loyal White Knights of the KKK have lost none of the extremeness and still harbours a desire for extreme racist violence.



THE LOYAL WHITE KNIGHTS OF THE KKK MEMBERSHIP

HOPE not hate has identified 300 supporters of the Loyal White Knights. Here are a selection of a few of their more leading members.

MONICA MAUSOLF



Location: Lawrenceburg, Tennessee
Role: Kligrapp (Secretary)

WILL QUIGG



Location: California
Role: Grand Dragon of the West Coast
He hit the headlines when he claimed to support Hillary Clinton.

MATTHEW STEWART



Location: Raleigh, Mississippi
Role: Exalted Cyclops (Chief Officer of a Klan)

JEFF ANDREWS



Location: Mobile, Alabama
Role: K-DUO of the E.C. of Alabama and East Coast King Kleagle

DEAN BURKE



Location: Somerville, Alabama

JOSH



Grand Dragon of Alabama
Interests: Hunting and Drag Racing

GARY LUNS福德



Location: Ashford, Alabama
Klokard (Lecturer)
A custom knife maker

KIRK WEIST



Location: Ohio
Grand Klaliff Ohio

JOE MEREDITH



Location: Harmony,
North Carolina
Role: Imperial Klokard
(disseminating 'klankraft')

JEN RENICK



Location: Hope Mills,
North Carolina

MAXWELL KEMP



Location: Canton, Georgia
Interests: Saltwater
and vape hobbyist

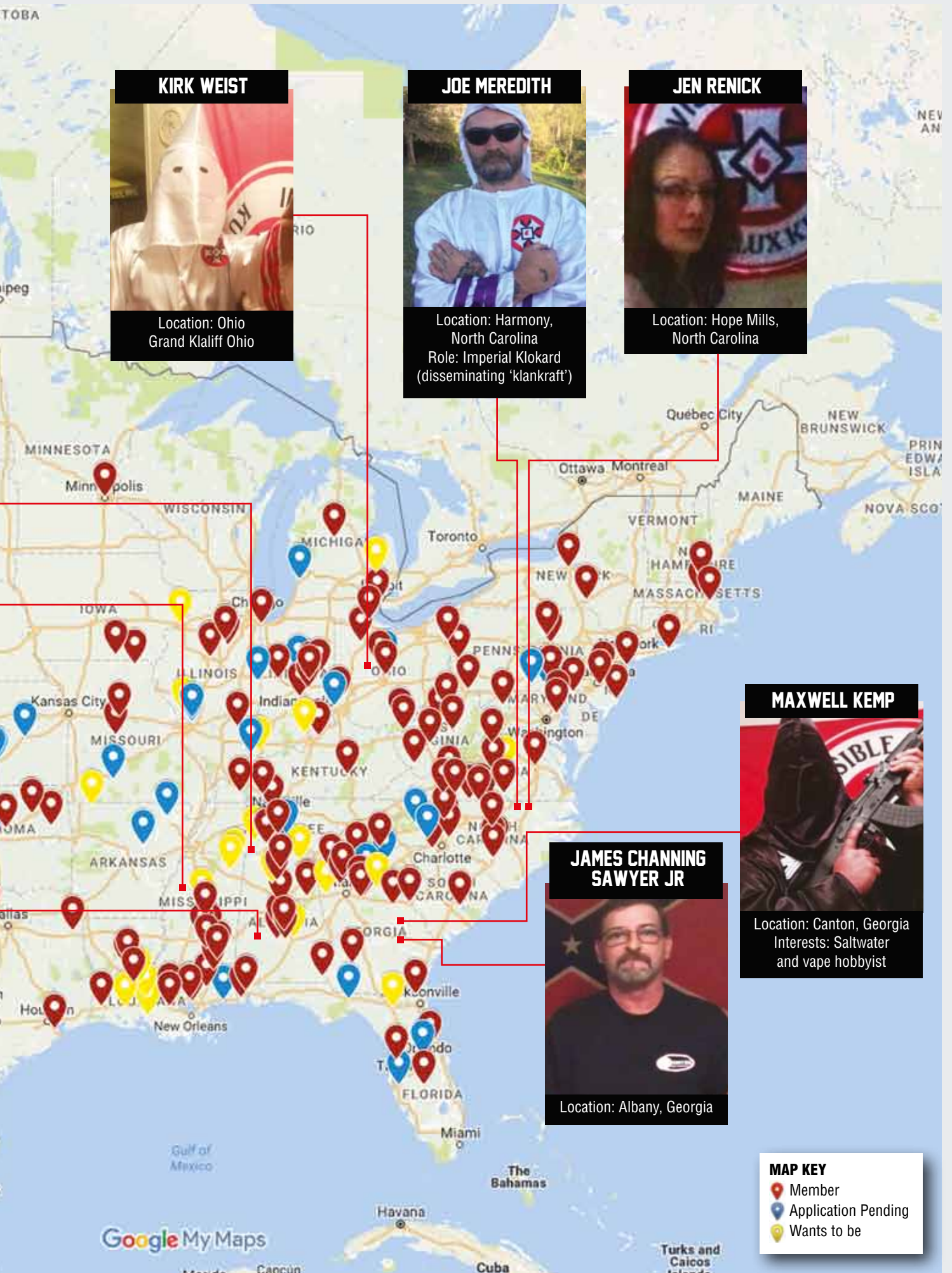
**JAMES CHANNING
SAWYER JR**



Location: Albany, Georgia

MAP KEY

- Member
- Application Pending
- Wants to be



Hate in the mainstream

Joe Mulhall investigates the pernicious nature of organised anti-Muslim hatred in America

We were in the very heart of Washington D.C. The first day of the conference had been at the historic Omni Shoreham Hotel, famous for hosting inaugural balls for every president since Franklin D. Roosevelt as well as being the hotel of choice for the Beatles on their first American tour back in 1964. The day's proceedings had been broadcast live from the ballroom on C-SPAN across America.

By day two we had moved to Capitol Hill and the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center which sits beneath the East Front plaza of the iconic 19th-century neoclassical Capitol Building. Thanks to the sponsorship of Congressman Pompeo it was based in the Congressional Auditorium, a large theatre reserved for use by Congress that sits just off the grand Emancipation Hall, named to recognise the contribution of enslaved labourers who helped build the U.S. Capitol.

The crowd whooped and hollered as they heard from their representatives, a procession of nine Congressmen, Congresswomen and a Senator addressed the enthusiastic audience. Among the speakers was Senator Ted Cruz, Donald Trump's challenger for the Republican nomination for President.

This was the national conference of ACT! for America, a Southern Poverty Law Centre-designated hate group and one of the most important organisations in the 'counter-jihadist' (anti-Muslim) milieu. And it has reached right into the heart of the American political establishment.

Speakers at the two-day ACT! conference included a roll-call of senior political figures. These included Congressman Lou Barletta, a

representative for Pennsylvania who sits on the Committee on Homeland Security and the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security. Also present was Congressman Scott Perry, who sits on the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation and Trade and the Committee on Homeland Security. Congressman Louie Gohmert from Texas spoke: he sits on the Committee on the Judiciary and the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Finally there was Congressman Peter King from New York, who is former chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, on which he still sits and is also the chair of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence. He also sits on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the Subcommittee on Terrorism, HUMINT, Analysis and Counterintelligence.

ACT! For America

ACT! (American Congress for Truth) was launched in the wake of the 9/11 attacks by Brigitte Gabriel, a Lebanese Christian who is now a U.S. citizen. She has a long track record of vocal islamophobia. In 2007 she stated:

"[A] Practicing Muslim who believes the word of the Koran to be the word of Allah ... who goes to mosque and prays every Friday, who prays five times a day — this practicing Muslim, who believes in the teachings of the Koran, cannot be a loyal citizen of the United States."

Since being launched ACT! has grown to be the largest anti-Muslim organisation in America and claims to have 300,000 members spread across the country in 1000 chapters.

It now proudly calls itself the 'NRA

of National Security', a reference to the National Rifle Association's famous lobbying power and its ability to influence legislation and policy on issues such as gun control. ACT!'s claim in not mere bluster or aspiration: it has played a role in passing 43 bills in 22 different states to 'protect America', many of which have been the so-called 'anti-Shariah' legislation. At present ACT!'s objective is to stop the resettlement of refugees from Muslim countries in America.

Links to Intelligence and Law Enforcement

While many of its activists, including Gabriel herself, hold views indistinguishable from the leaders of European groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) or PEGIDA, ACT! is not ostracised or marginalised but rather operates within the mainstream. This phenomenon is described by the Centre for New Community (CNC), a U.S. based research and advocacy organisation, as 'extreme but not fringe'.

Amazingly Gabriel's influence goes well beyond convincing Congressmen and women and Senators to attend ACT!





events: it extends to her being asked to address members of Congress, the Pentagon, the Joint Forces Staff College, the U.S. Special Operations Command, the U.S. Asymmetric Warfare group and the FBI.

If this was an anomaly it would be worrying enough but Gabriel is not the only anti-Muslim activist who has been invited to address and advise American intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

In 2009 Robert Spencer, the notorious director of the anti-Muslim and counter-jihadist website, Jihad Watch, and co-founder of Stop Islamisation of America (SIOA) through which he has connections to EDL founder Tommy Robinson, was recruited by the FBI to personally facilitate training. His works have been utilised during training sessions on Islam. Spencer was later banned from entering the UK (following a HOPE not hate-led petition to the Government) because of his extremism.

Similarly, disgraced former FBI agent John Guandolo, who is the founder of an organisation called Understanding the Threat and has stated that American Muslims 'do not have a First Amendment

right to do anything', has provided training courses to law enforcement agencies across the country.

Thankfully, numerous Guandolo training events have also been cancelled and accreditations withdrawn due to pressure from civil rights and community organisations. And, indeed, many of the relationships between anti-Muslim activists and the FBI and intelligence agencies have proved relatively short lived.

Stephen Coughlin, for example, worked as a specialist contractor on the Joint Staff, J-2 (intelligence) for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon. He is said to have been specifically requested

because of his specialist knowledge on Islamic doctrine as it applies to jihad. He was later dropped from his position due to his extreme and controversial views on Islam and Muslims. He is now a Senior Fellow at Frank Gaffney's anti-Muslim Center For Security Policy (Gaffney is a high-profile counter-jihadist and the man who carried out spurious surveys, claiming American Muslims supported jihad, which Donald Trump later alluded to in his speeches) and addressed the ACT! Conference in D.C., where he laid out his conspiratorial theory that Muslims have adopted a Maoist insurgency model to conquer America and the West.



Trump

While the intelligence and law enforcement communities seem to have distanced themselves from some of these more extreme characters, the current presidential race has afforded new opportunities for anti-Muslim activists to enter the mainstream.

During the race for the Republican nomination Ted Cruz announced an advisory team that included aforementioned anti-Muslim activist Frank 'Obama is a Muslim' Gaffney from the Centre for Security Policy (CSP) as a foreign policy advisor.

However, Cruz's defeat has by no means ended Gaffney's influence as he also plays a key role in Trump's understanding of the 'threat' of Islam and Muslims. Trump has quoted Gaffney's discredited research and is said to have been a key influence on his openly racist comments about Muslims.

Other CSP-linked individuals have also found their way onto Trump's advisory team. Walid Phares, who sits on Trump's Foreign Policy advisory team, has spoken at CSP events and been a guest on Gaffney's radio show. He is also a former Senior Fellow of the neo-conservative-aligned think tank, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD), and was named in the Centre for American Progress report *Fear Inc* as one of the 'validators' that make up an Islamophobia network in America.

Another Trump advisor is Joseph Schmitz. Schmitz has written a number of articles for the CSP and was a contributor to its conspiratorial report *Sharia: The Threat to America*. Schmitz also sits on the Advisory Board of the American Freedom Law Centre (AFLC), which is run by the highly controversial figure David Yerushalmi.

At the ACT! Conference in D.C. another Trump advisor spoke, Lt. Gen. Mike Flynn, who advises the Presidential nominee on issues of national security. Flynn has also recently been appointed to ACT!'s board of directors.

Worryingly, a Trump presidency would mean that anti-Muslim extremists would be ushered into the White House and play a key role in advising the American President on issues of national security and policies towards American Muslims.

How is this possible?

How such extreme and marginal figures have found themselves advising American intelligence, law enforcement and Presidential candidates is something that requires much more serious research. However, there are a few likely drivers of the phenomenon.

It seems that post-9/11 trauma has been central to providing a pathway

to legitimacy for anti-Muslim activists. In the aftermath of these tragic attacks it seems that the intelligence and law enforcement agencies were grasping around for any and all information on the threat posed by radical Islam.

This desire for information resulted in extreme figures such as Spencer and Gabriel being brought in for short periods, before being dropped in light of their extreme and marginal views. However, despite later being 'purged' by the FBI/Pentagon their period as advisors and speakers has afforded them a lasting credibility which they have subsequently used to their advantage.

In addition, another reason that such people have found themselves ushered into the mainstream is that their views are, to borrow the CNC phrase once more, 'extreme but not fringe'. Much of the so-called 'counter-jihad' movement (CJM) in America is driven by an acute fear of impending national decline and an unquestioning belief in American exceptionalism.

Thus, one of the reasons that these extreme people get so close to power and the mainstream in America is that these fears and concerns are themselves mainstream. The CJM mirrors wider societal concerns of decline and crisis and offers an internal and external scapegoat in the form of Islam and Muslims. Anyone with a basic grasp of the history of antisemitism in the 1920s and 1930s will no doubt see worrying parallels here.

Wider Anti-Muslim Sentiment in America

This all takes place in the context of wider societal Islamophobia. While CJM organisations are a cause of societal prejudice, they are also the result of it. ACT! for America alone claims 300,000 members and partly feeds off societal attitudes towards Muslims.

Polling conducted by the Pew Research Centre earlier this year showed just how mainstream anti-Muslim attitudes have become in the USA. Fourteen percent (14%) of those polled thought 'about half' the US Muslim population was anti-American and 11% believed 'most' or 'almost all' were. Similarly, polling by YouGov at the end of last year found that 55% of surveyed Americans had an 'unfavourable' opinion of Islam.

For some voters this issue overrules all others. I met a motel owner called Mike in North Versailles, Pennsylvania, who explained that despite being a lifelong Democrat voter he had switched allegiance to Trump because of his (now softened) policy on banning all Muslim immigration. 'It's the number one issue,'

he told me and claimed all his friends felt the same.

However, it is also important to note that much of this is nothing new but rather has become more discussed and noticed due to the recent Presidential campaign. Back in 2011 Pew conducted research on American Muslim's experiences and found that 28% said that in the last year people had acted suspicious of them, while 22% said they had been called offensive names. Kalia Abiade, the advocacy director at the Centre for New Community, explained:

'I think one of the things that the [Trump] campaign has done is really shone a bright light on what has been going on for years... This isn't new... the way that Islamophobia has been so mainstream in public has really been happening, especially at local and state levels, for a long time. This campaign season has really just brought it to the fore.'

Research by sociologists at the University of Minnesota suggests that things are getting worse. Using data from the 2014 Boundaries in the American Mosaic (BAM) Survey and comparing it to the same survey conducted in 2003, they found that negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslims are not only higher than any other religious or non-religious group, but also rising at a faster rate. For example, the number of Americans who say they would disapprove of their child marrying a Muslim has risen from 33.5% in 2003 to 48.9% in the 2014 data.

This, of course, has real ramifications for American Muslims. A recent report by The Bridge Initiative based at Georgetown University showed how: 'The 2016 U.S. presidential season began against a backdrop of already rising Islamophobia in 2015, threatening American Muslim religious freedom'. It revealed how in 2015 there were 174 reported incidents of anti-Muslim violence and vandalism that included 12 murders and 29 physical assaults.

While it is important to monitor and combat organised anti-Muslim organisations such as ACT! for America it is important to also place them in the wider context of anti-Muslim prejudice and understand that while they contribute to it they also feed off it.

Many of these problems are by no means new but have rather been catalysed by the Trump campaign and exposed by the heightened media coverage. These problems existed long before Trump and they will exist long after him and while a Trump victory will make things much worse a Trump defeat does not necessarily make things better. ●

Tackling organised hatred in America

WITH TRUMP closing in the polls and anti-Muslim hate groups entering the mainstream, it is easy to get depressed about the state of America. Yet, as always during what feels like a dark time, there are those working tirelessly to bring hope and change.

One such group is the Chicago-based Centre for New Community (CNC), a national research and advocacy group that specifically targets organised hate groups. Terri Johnson, CNC's Executive Director, herself a civil rights activist has worked in the field of racial and social justice for two decades, explained:

'We pay attention to what these [hate] groups are doing – make sure people know who they are and how they work, and then work with communities both on a local level and on a national level to make sure that we marginalise those messages and make sure that the hatred and the policies attached to that hatred and the sentiments attached to that are minimised in the lives of real people.'

While CNC focuses on a wide array of hate groups its main focus is currently the groups and people that make up the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim movements across America.

The research team produces weekly updates, quarterly threat assessments and profiles of people and organisations that they monitor.

Their approach to combating these groups is in some ways similar to HOPE not hate, in that they combine research with community work for maximum effect.

The advocacy team works to make sure the resources produced by the research team are communicated to a wider audience, and disseminated to those people and groups on the ground who can best utilise the information.

Kalia Abiade, advocacy director, explains the approach: 'Some of it is saying look, this is who these people are. It's what we call "haters 101". It's really us just saying look this is who the anti-immigrant movement is, this is how they



Visit The Center for New Community www.newcomm.org

work, this is who they work with and the same for the anti-Muslim activists.'

The advocacy side also engages in strategic campaign planning, media work and supporting activists on the ground via webinars and workshops. Of course working in a country the size of America presents its own challenges as problems manifest themselves in different ways across the country. For example, says Abiade: 'Anti-Muslim discrimination is playing out in different ways in different parts of the country so our work really has to be tailored to the communities that we are working with.'

One successful example of the impact of CNC's work is when it helped stop Congressmen and women from meeting with members of the notorious anti-Muslim organisation ACT! For America during its national conference this year. By informing representatives of the hateful politics of the organisation they successfully convinced many to cancel their meetings with the group.

Is there HOPE?

Despite so much doom and gloom in America at the moment it is not all bad news. 'I think one of the things that has

happened that has been great [...] is that more organisers and more activists are realising that we have to work together', continued Abiade.

This is so important when the same group of people pushing anti-Muslim prejudice are also often the people pushing against immigrant, LGBTQ, trade union and women's rights and for voter suppression. There is a commonality of oppression and organisers are coming together to fight their common enemies.

And, as Terri Johnson sees it, though things are bad at the moment it is always worth remembering how far America has come:

'For those of us living in the storm, the storm will end and we will be stronger as a result of it. [...] Some years we do better than other but the fact that we have made the progress we have made is a source of hope.'

While Trump and his anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim message has made headlines around the world and galvanised American racists we should never forget that there are always people and organisations that are willing to stand up and fight back. ●

★ MY ★ AMERICAN JOURNEY



Matthew Collins embarks on a personal journey across Pennsylvania to explore the problems facing blue-collar communities.



It's a seven-hour journey by train between Pennsylvania's two big cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The train itself is enormous, a hulking, shining example of the grandeur and splendour of American manufacturing and comfort. The formidable air conditioning makes lightly-attired passengers sink and cower near-frozen in armchair-sized seats.

The train is considerably cheaper than taking the plane, but it's grotesquely slow, crawling through the 349 miles of Pennsylvania's Keystone Corridor. After two hours and with no fanfare we crawl into the state capital, Harrisburg. And from there, shunted across different tracks and made to wait for other services, onwards to Pittsburgh.

I was here to see two of my brothers who have made the US their home, but also to understand more about an America that seemed to have fallen in love with Donald Trump.

Homes in the hood

Pennsylvania is the birthplace of American Independence. It's also God and gun country and people will use one to protect their strict adherence to the other. It's not quite the Mid-West and Pennsylvania is cut into the map only slightly above the south. "But you'll experience a bit of both," I was warned as I was packed off with a blanket to keep me warm.

While in Philadelphia I'd tagged along with State Senator Vincent Hughes on his tour of 'distressed' communities in the west of the city. We'd met at the Baptist church on Bible Way, a busy road where churches and empty shopfronts jockeyed for prominence, while homeless men and women begged for loose change in the middle of the road.

Senator Hughes was a cool, serious individual. He'd made a name for himself as a champion of the poor and underprivileged in Philadelphia during his 22 years in the Senate.

The police escorted us, stopping traffic to allow us through his 7th District. It was a tour of Black neighbourhoods where we saw people sitting aimlessly on porches in front of homes that looked fit to collapse. It's the 'hood', but Senator Hughes kept stopping his church minibus to get out and talk. In places where history, racism, budget cuts and austerity hits historically the hardest, Hughes has campaigned and championed affordable and social housing.

In fact, he has sought to become a pioneer of regeneration without the social cleansing that sometimes accompanies it. Hughes has ploughed money, enthusiasm and energy into community projects while challenging businesses to come build and bring new jobs and new opportunities to local people.

In 7th District there's a new supermarket and new shopping centre, which recently opened after locals conspired to offer free rents and reduced rates to encourage inward investment.

"Even when you offer them a community model, an opportunity to make money, they sometimes still refuse to come," Hughes said when we reached the shopping centre. It's not particularly grand, but there are shops, a supermarket and a new bus stop and a few cars in the carpark.

In his District a majority of the dilapidated and distressed homes are owned by their occupants. Hughes helped pioneer a buy-out for residents so new homes could be built. Some new project homes are already built and people are living behind new bricks with tidy, small gardens. More homes are currently in production. This project is costing \$20m and there's talk of another \$50m in the pipeline.

"While they're building here people get jobs. People get jobs, they move out of poverty. People move out of poverty, new opportunities arise," Hughes explained. Reinvestment in

infrastructures is a common and reoccurring theme in modern America. Hughes denied it was a spending a way out of trouble when budgets and dreams are already slashed.

A local woman talks us through her battle to bring jobs to the area. "There wasn't a shop for miles" she said. "People would not come to the neighbourhood. They would not invest in us. So I went and sat with the big men in suits and told them 'build us a supermarket and we'll shop there. Offer us jobs and we'll work there'. They came and they're still coming around."

There was a potentially extraordinary success story in the making here, yet there was a sadly noticeable absence of the local press. But while local people may often be unglamorous, they are key to change. Perhaps the inspirational lady who had worked so hard to bring jobs to her community would one day be seen as a black Erin Brockovich and be played by a glamorous black actress in Hollywood.

However, while local people can achieve amazing things, they also need the help and support of politicians. Major structural issues require change from the top. In the new and old churches along Bible Way, often-disillusioned people will be told they have to get out and vote for Hillary Clinton this November. Meanwhile, homeless men will continue pushing shopping carts of rubbish past churches and gun crime remains an issue right across Philadelphia.

Donald Trump says that he is the man to fix these issues. Homes and jobs are what really matters, though. When I asked Hughes about Trump, he replied: "Let's just say at least he [Trump] has been honest about how he thinks. Now we have to offer our alternative."

The Deer Hunters

After my mammoth train journey from Philadelphia, we slide into Pittsburgh an hour late. My taxi driver assumed I was Australian and asked



if there was much crime down under.

"There's lots of crime here" he offered. "Gun crime. It's mainly the blacks, the negros...." He checked in the mirror to see how I responded (I was torn between bemusement and disgust). He reminded me of John Cazale's character Stanley, from the movie *The Deer Hunter*.

Pittsburgh is steel city. It's clean, wide and its new dark glass buildings rise into the sky. It is a city of bridges, a description the city itself has adopted.

Pittsburgh's manufacturing and workforce made its mark in the early 19th century, when workers organised, agitated and rioted whenever it was felt the growth and pace of industry was too exploitive. The town became the industrial backbone of America's manufacturing contributions during the Second World War. Pittsburgh and the surrounding satellite mill towns continued to produce almost half the steel used in American manufacturing until the 1970s.

The city, its industry and surrounds were lionised in the multi-award winning 1978 film *The Deer Hunter*, about two Pennsylvanians (Robert De Niro and Christopher Walken) steel workers being sent to war in Vietnam. The film was set but not filmed in Clairton just outside Pittsburgh in the Monongahela River Valley.

In 1988, Clairton was designated a distressed municipality by Pennsylvania's Department of Community Affairs. The steel industry there had collapsed and since the year 2000, 48,000 American Steel Workers had lost their job. I travelled up and down the valley looking at derelict steel mills and hearing the tragic stories of the heroin epidemic gripping the area.

Workers for Hillary?

At the grand Philadelphia Museum of Art, up whose steps Rocky Balboa once ran, I meet Leo Gerard, President of the United Steel Workers Union (USW). Gerard is also head of 'Workers Uniting', a trans-Atlantic merger with Britain's Unite union.

We're at an event run by the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM), which is throwing its weight behind Hillary Clinton. AAM is a coalition of manufactures and labour unions campaigning for fair trade for American manufactures and workers. They've produced the 'Little Blue Collar Fact Book' in defence and support of American industry and workers. It's the week of the Democratic Convention and Hillary Clinton is just getting over the line past fellow Democratic presidential wannabe, Bernie Sanders.

Clinton's advisors are in attendance at the AAM event

and rub shoulders with journalists, labour organisers, utility and steel workers as the manufacturing industry and unions throw their weight behind her campaign. In return, they expect her to represent them and support American manufacturing.

However, the democrats can't simply expect the full support of all blue-collar manufacturing workers. The Republican candidate Donald Trump is also promising a fair deal of his own for American manufacturing, claiming that America has lost nearly one third of its manufacturing jobs since 1997, following the enactment of trade deals supported by Bill and Hillary Clinton.

Eighteen million American labour union members traditionally deliver around 65-70% of their vote to the Democrats. Not just stalling deindustrialisation but completely reversing it is where Gerard envisions Clinton's manufacturing policy. AAM champions the German model where 23% of jobs are either in or related to manufacturing.

Sanders and Trump – the two outsiders – were whispered to be far more popular than Clinton on the shop and factory floors and in the USW offices I visited in both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, where they still had their Sanders bunting up.

The Decline of American Steel Manufacturing

My friend in the USW's grand offices in Pittsburgh denies and sidesteps the 'steel work in decline' narrative. It's best described as stagnant, despite 12,000 steel jobs being lost between 2014-2015. But steel is under attack, and has been since the 1970's when America opened up competition to the Japanese steel industry, following which the Chinese entered the fray.

In 2015, American steel production fell by 12%. Manufacturing unions are now demanding that the American government meet the competition head-on and subsidise US manufacturing. Experienced steel workers I spoke to laid the blame for the current situation squarely at the feet of Bill Clinton, and later President Obama, for trade agreements with the Chinese.

China's government – owned and – supported steel industry now represents almost half of the world's steelmaking and more than half of the world's overcapacity. Between 2000 and 2014, Chinese steel production increased a whopping 540%, while U.S. production declined 13%. In a recent review by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, the Chinese government was described as "a company disguised as a country."

In the steel valleys around Pittsburgh, the massive mills are operating well below capacity. In one case, 40 men and women work furnaces that were once attended by thousands. In January of 2016, overall capacity was reported to be as low as 60%.

Workers talk of having to sign long-term contracts that are non-negotiable, solely so that the steel companies can at least compete on the open market. Some companies also push to move to states where the 'right to work' as good as guarantees non-unionised and unorganised workers.

But for now, in the main, the steel industry would appear to be dependent on the likes of Leo Gerard, the USW

President, to bring presidential candidates to the table.

However, job losses are continuing, accompanied by an ongoing exodus from the valleys around Pittsburgh. Many make the short journey into the city itself to try and pick up work. One worker, hand on hips, described remaining in town as a “toss-up between that or death.”

The AAM’s proposals and Clinton’s policies are met with exhausted cynicism by some.

“It’s the same, every election,” one person told me. “They run to blue collar workers with all kinds of promises.” Another ex-steel worker recounted how President Obama went to her steel plant during his first term to announce a major new initiative, only days before the mill was closed and hundreds made redundant. Obama’s pipe dream to build a gas pipeline across the length of the country still lay in the railway sidings in town.

The truest American Independence came hand in hand with its industrialization. From the goldfields then into the coal fields, to the automotive and the steel industries, The United States built middle American on industry. The parallels with deindustrialised Britain is stark in places; Industry eventually abandons its home and its communities.

Donald Trump with his boorish promises is not the quite unfathomable champion of the blue collar worker as you may imagine. He is after all, an oxygen of the previous millennium. He won’t reinvigorate jobs, industry and lives with racist lies and “locker room” banter, but he is of the ilk that built empires on the back of the blood and sweat typical of the people he needs to appeal to. Looking ahead, looking forward from Clairton and Monongahela River Valley is gloomy. So much of what built the Great American story in the last two centuries is now depressingly idle.

As I’m sure Trump knows, Idle hands make light work for the devil. ●

Bible Belted



AT MIDDAY, as the sun and the heat were at their most oppressive, a small noise rose from the distance. Into the centre of Philadelphia came a small procession of men and women following an enormous black preacher who walked slowly with a walking stick for aid. Crippled with arthritis, the Reverend William Barber moved into focus and like a Protestant Pied Piper, Philadelphians either fell in beside him or walked along the pavement to see him.

To his rhetorical questions came answers: LGBT rights, an end to poverty, equality for women, labour rights, equal rights, fair pay and dignity.

The southern pastor had travelled from North Carolina. Along the way he had asked a coalition of imams and rabbis to join him and other Christians on a walk through the centre of Philadelphia. For an hour, dripping in sweat, he called upon people to join in prayer or holy silence and to ask the Democratic Party to renew a vow of morality. He’d made the same sort of walk and had made the same sort of demand only a week before, this time at the Republican Party Convention in Cleveland Ohio. There, his prayers and his dignity had gone unanswered. Their morality, it appears, was somewhat different. By his own admission, Barber is a “Conservative theological, liberal, evangelical, Biblicist.”

In Philadelphia, Barber’s prayers were answered. One of Hillary Clinton’s aides came to Barber and demanded

a hug. Later that night, Barber would wow the convention with a blistering ten-minute sermon on the morality of decent pay, equal rights and justice.

A “moral revolution of values,” so different to the stifling ‘morality’ we sometimes hear men in cloth demand.

I walked Barber to his car. He was delighted I was from England. Walking, slowly, he gave a quick outline of the radical traditions of English pastors. “Abolitionists, and traditionalists”.

He described evangelical preachers in the camp of Presidential Candidate Donald Trump as “using God’s name to reaffirm the immorality that can happen in America. I pray from Trump, because God made him, but immorality is not God’s work.”

The day I landed back in the UK, one of the first things that flashed up on my social media was how American Airlines had removed a black preacher from a domestic flight because he had two seats. Two seats he had paid for. The complainer, another passenger, had said he didn’t want “those sort of people” on the flight. There was no explanation given as to what “those sort” of people are or were. Only a week before, American Airlines had removed a Muslim passenger from a flight because a fellow passenger didn’t not want one of “those people” on his or her flight, either.

In America, it’s not just God that defines people. It is their morality too. ●

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